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A

WARNING TO WIVES:

OR,

THE PLATONIC LOVER.

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
"COUSIN GEOFFREY," "THE MARRYING MAN,"  
"THE MATCH-MAKER," "THE JILT," "THE BREACH OF  
PROMISE," AND "THE LIFE OF A BEAUTY."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

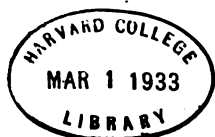
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# A WARNING TO WIVES.

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## CHAPTER I.

The season was the end of spring ; the weather sometimes balmy and delicious, sometimes cold and nipping ; but whatever the atmosphere, Mistress Grizzie Macauley never missed her two weekly meetings and tea-drinkings at the Rev. Peter Mc. Howler's, nor the kirk twice on Sunday. A stout cob, with a pillion, conveyed the mistress and the maid, and Janet had to walk by the horse's side across the moor, in all winds and weathers ; but the air, the exercise, the early hours, and regular life, she led at Muir House,

however wearisome to her spirit, were highly beneficial to her health. From a pale, thin, delicate girl, she grew into a beautiful young woman; the softest rose brightened her snow-drop complexion; a vermilion tint warmed her once colourless but pretty lips; her form rounded into perfect symmetry, and her large black eyes, bright with youth and health, formed a curious contrast to her profuse 'lint-white locks.' Her father, despising all modern fashions, had compelled her to confine herself to the national costume of her country, such as he remembered it in his younger days; and though his object was humility and scorn of the vanities of the world, he quite defeated himself in this case, for no frenchified or modern fashions could have made the young Janet half so picturesque, or half so attractive, as did the national costume of her foremother's. A neat jacket or gown, as it was called, either of scarlet or black, exactly fitted her pretty figure, and a short skirt of dark blue, made, by its ample folds, her waist appear more slender; and her beautiful

foot and leg, in its dark stocking, and silver-buckled shoe, more delicate; on her round arms, bare from the elbow, she wore a pair of black mittens, and among her waving flaxen hair, parted on her forehead and gathered into a cluster behind, the national snood appeared. For all purposes of cloak and bonnet, an ample Macauley tartan served her, and any one who had seen her thus attired, leading along the short-legged, stout old cob, with his double burthen, would have fancied Caledonia herself was taking charge of the two old spinsters.

Peter Mc. Howler, long supposed to be a bachelor on principle, a raw-boned, sandy-haired enthusiast of middle age, could not see the pretty, arch, and attractive Janet twice a week at his own house, and twice every Sunday at the kirk, without emotions hitherto unknown to him. He began to remember with pleasure that Saint Peter was a married man, and to quote Paul's assertion, that he too might, if he chose, "lead about a sister or a wife, like any other apostle." He was a man very well to do—had a comfortable house,

and a well-stocked farm, and Miss Grizzie Macauley having long since given up all hopes of him, for herself, saw with approval his unequivocal marks of attachment for her niece.

As for Janet herself, he was so unlike all the heroes she had read of by stealth in her mother's old novels—so unlike the lovers, that mother had described as thronging the gay walks of auld Aberdeen—and, worse still, so very unlike the *beau ideal* of her own warm heart and romantic fancy, that she never for one moment would tolerate the thought of him as a lover. As he grew fond, her feelings changed from indifference to loathing. Every tender smile, revealing his long projecting teeth, made her shudder; every delicate attention only increased her coyness and reserve. No present, however trifling, could he induce her to accept; and Mistress Grizzie Macauley, who had once been deeply in love with him, and who indeed, if the secrets of her maiden bosom must be told, was single for his sake, was proud of what she considered the virgin modesty

and feminine dignity of her niece. Indeed, in the pride of her heart, she wrote word to her brother, that Janet, under her care, was growing a very pattern of modesty and virtue—that she had proved herself above all temptation from man's advances—that no touch of woman's weakness (whatever she might feel within) was discernible without—that she was indeed of those who 'must be wooed, and not unsought be won'—and that the lassie's modest and coy discretion was a glory even to the house of Macauley.

And all this she really believed; judging by her own tastes, and seeing Janet's lover with her own partial eyes, she believed that the girl who could so avoid or repel the Reverend Peter Mc. Howler, was in danger from no man, and was proof against all the fascinations of the male sex—all the weakness of her own!

Mrs. Macauley continued to linger on in delicate health, and the gentle Alice, keenly watched by her father, gave no further offence. Spring ripened into summer. The moor was one sheet

of purple bloom ; the skies were deeply blue, and even the long walks across the heath were fraught with delight to the young and active Janet. It was decided that, at the end of the autumn, she was to return to her own home. The enamoured Peter grew more and more pressing and devoted—Janet more and more coy and distant—and even Miss Grizzie a little anxious to bring matters to a successful issue before Janet's departure.

And now the rich and glowing month of August brought to the long vacant halls, and castles, and villas of the North, the gay sportsmen, bent at once on killing time and grouse. At a few miles distance from Muir House, there was an old country seat, (generally empty,) but which belonging to the gay young Lord Elphinstone, was usually filled with sporting men at this particular season. In the seclusion of Muir House, little or nothing was heard of these gay visitors, beyond the news brought by a Gaberlunzie or a pedlar, that the Ha' was fu' o' gay company, and

the distant shots, which occasionally made even old Surefoot start and shy.

Janet only heard of these visitors as a reckless, drinking, idle set, whose chief delight was to destroy, rather from cruelty than for food, the innocent creatures, whose bright brown plumage and glittering eyes she had often espied at a distance among the heather, and whose notes were familiar to her ear. Happy would it have been for Janet, had she never known more of them than this!

One beautiful afternoon of a day that had been oppressively sultry, but which was now freshened by a soft breeze, Janet was proceeding as usual on foot by the side of the old horse, laden with Miss Grizzie and her maid Maggie. They were bound across the moor to evening service at the kirk, for it was the Sabbath, and all nature seemed hushed into a sweet repose. The early evening service over, the Reverend Peter was to have the honour of receiving the party at the manse to tea, and was to escort them back across the moor to their own home. Janet's picturesque



costume was of her Sunday's best, and even Miss Grizzie and her maid were superlatively spruce and clean in honor of the day; and Surefoot's sleek coat had received an extra polish.

As the little cavalcade moved slowly along, Miss Grizzie, with a peacock voice, broke forth into the Old Hundredth Psalm. Maggie groaned in chorus; and Janet's sweet young voice occasionally joined in.

"I'm glad you've the grace to take your part, Janet," said the aunt, kindly; "if my auld heart o'erflows wi' gratitude to him who sends this sweet breeze and this bright sun, this blossoming heather and this soft turf, what must your young bosom do, my bairn!—you, rich in all the gude gifts that once were mine—youth, health, charms to win the love of the first of men and of ministers, and a prospect of a lang and happy life in his blessed hame, safe from a' the vanities and corruptions of this sinfu' world."

"Indeed Aunt!" said Janet, stooping to gather a bunch of harebells, and to hide her con-

fusion—"I have much to be thankfu' for; but a hame and a husband here, are na' amang the number of my blessings, nor do I covet either."

"That's weel said!" replied Miss Grizzie; "it's modest and maidenly—it would ill become a dochter o' the house o' Macauley to covet any man's unoffered luv; and I can weel believe it's hard for you to credit the fact, that you, a young and thoughtless lassie, have made a conquest of sic a man. But time will unravel a' things, and I'm na' the woman to fill a young lassie's head wi' fause hopes and vain desires. What say you, Maggie?"

"I think with you, Mistress," groaned Maggie, "that Miss Janet has found favor in the eyes of the Minister, and that he means, as so holy a man must, a' that's honorable by her; but she suld na' be too bockward wi' si an man, gifted, and weel-favored, and weel to do as he is; there are many hearts a sighing, and many eyes a speering after him. He is a man fu' o' grace, and gude gifts, well provided wi' linens and kit-

chen gudes, a siller tea-pot, cream-jug, and sugar-basin, forbye twal siller tea-spoons, and as many table-spoons. Were I Miss Janet, I'd na' be lang in saying 'aye,' for he's na' a man to gang begging for a wife, and but for being ower shy and prood mysel' wi' men folk, I'd na' be a serving lass the day, but mistress of a weel stockit farm."

"Ye are what you were predestined to be, Maggie!" replied Miss Grizzie, in rather a stern voice, "and I fear you let your head run too much on the pomps and vanities of this sinfu' world. But, as I said before, my heart o'erflows wi' gratitude when I look on this fair world, where God has made a' things gude. Oh, the bonnie land! Oh, the sweet heather! Oh, the dear Sabbath bells, and the rousing discourse that awaits us! but, abuve all, the blessing of being far awa' from a wicked world—shut out by yon blue hills from vanity and corruption! Let us raise our voices in a hymn of praise! here we

are na' tempted abuve what we can bear; here we are safe indeed!"

Scarcely had Miss Grizzie uttered the word 'safe,' when the report of a gun was heard disagreeably near; a beautiful black cock fluttered towards them, fell bleeding at Janet's feet, and Surefoot, startled out of all his decorum, by a few kickings up behind, threw Maggie off her pillion, and then rearing in wrath and terror on his hind legs, so alarmed Miss Grizzie, that she threw herself from her saddle beside the shrieking Maggie.

Janet, wild with alarm, rushed up to her aunt, who had fallen on her head, and lay with closed eyes and death-like complexion, perfectly senseless. Maggie shrieked aloud that her arm was broken, and that she was a "ruined bodie and a dead lassie the day!"

But the screams and howls of poor Maggie, grievous as they were to hear, did not terrify or distress Janet a thousandth part so much as the death-like stillness of her aunt. The slight girl

vainly attempted to raise Miss Grizzie's gigantic figure—vainly tried, by the aid of her aunt's large old fan and her smelling-bottle, to recal her to life; and perceiving no token of returning consciousness, she threw herself beside her and wept aloud. But at this moment the sportsman, whose gun had caused all this distress and outcry, came forth from behind an ample bush of gorse (*anglice furze*), which had concealed him from their view, and approaching Janet with an expression of anxious sympathy, and with an air at once military and courtly, he expressed his deep regret at the accident, and proffered his services.

Janet, thoughtless of self, exclaimed, wringing her hands: "Oh, is she dead? tell me if she is dead." While poor Maggie, shrieking with pain, exclaimed: "Eh! Sir, the puir mistress is dead and past help—sae gie a hand to the living, who is suffering mair than the torments o' the damned!"

"Be not alarmed, young lady," said the stranger, in

'A voice whose music to the ear,  
Became a memory to the soul.'

"The old lady is only stunned; a few drops of this"—and he took out a leathern bottle, richly chased in silver, (a bottle known to the initiated as a pocket pistol)—"will restore her, I doubt not."

He held it to her lips as he spoke, instructing Janet to bathe her temples and chafe her hands with some of the same spirit; and after a few moments, Miss Grizzie awoke with a deep groan.

The stranger then proceeded to attend to the earnest cries of Maggie, who from the same bottle took a tolerable draught, and whose arm, though terribly bruised, cut, and sprained, luckily proved not to be broken.

On his return to Janet and her aunt, the former had recovered sufficient composure to look at and to thank him, and as their eyes met for the first time, Janet felt that the visions of her

girlhood were realized. She looked and loved ! Tall, graceful, with a military carriage, a handsome countenance, a winning smile, and an enchanting voice, it was no marvel the stranger charmed Janet's inexperienced eyes, for he was the first gentleman it had been her lot to meet. His velveteen sporting jacket and foraging cap set off his fine figure and light curling hair. But his style, his voice, and his manner—in them were the spell. Janet had seen handsome young farmers, handsome peasant lads, but she had never before seen a handsome man of fashion.

He kindly proposed to go in search of his servant and his dog-cart ; both had been left at a little Inn not very far off. Miss Grizzie thanked him with majestic grace, and Janet's large black eyes spoke for her. It seemed very long to Janet before he returned ; but having pulled some heather as a pillow for her aunt and Maggie, she beguiled the time by going in search of Surefoot, who was quietly grazing at some hundred yards' distance, where a patch of velvet sod gleamed like

a green isle amid the heather. He suffered himself to be taken prisoner and led back to his mistress.

The stranger arrived a little while after with his dog-cart and a spruce groom. Both Miss Grizzie and her maid were too timid and too much bruised to mount Surefoot again, so they were deposited in the dog-cart, and driven by Snaffle, the groom; and Janet mounted Surefoot, while to secure her safety, the stranger walked by her side, and occasionally led her steed.

In this order they returned safely to Muir House, much having been said, but more looked and felt, during that short but eventful journey. The stranger took his leave after intimating his intention of calling in a day or two to inquire after Miss Grizzie and Maggie. Miss Grizzie thanked him—Maggie growled in chorus—Janet blushed and curtsied.

Poor Janet! her eyes followed his stately form till it was out of sight; and Janet had seen her evil genius.

The stranger was Gaspar Smiley.



## CHAPTER II.

We must not pause in this brief retrospect—(meant only to explain a little, Janet's miserable situation at the opening of our tale)—to follow very closely the narrative of her temptation and her downfall, for that she did fall, the reader is, of course, already aware.

Innocent, inexperienced, with a heart all passion and a head all romance, she loved the cold Calculator, with woman's first, all-believing, all-devoted love; while her peculiar and interesting style of beauty, her extreme youth, her *naïveté*, and the impediments he met with in his private

wooing of Janet, excited a desire for her possession, a passion for her person, and an interest in this lawless enterprise, more like love than anything Gaspar Smiley had hitherto experienced.

On the very night of the accident, Miss Grizzie and Maggie having been conveyed to bed, under the auspices of an old crone who occasionally officiated in the family as nurse, washer-woman, or char-woman, Janet sate alone in her aunt's little parlour, gazing at the brilliant harvest moon, and recalling every word, look, and tone of the interesting stranger. A thousand new and delicious emotions were busy in her bosom, and the large Juliet-like black eyes with which she gazed at the moon, were full of soft and happy tears. She felt that entire trust in the future, and that conviction that the stranger was all he looked, which never survives the earliest teens. Busy fancy wove a glittering tissue, to which all the actual realities of life seemed the coarsest homespun. And just as, with a rising blush and a heaving bosom, Janet

recalled his last earnest look, the gentle pressure of his hand, and his whispered "God bless you, lovely one, and farewell!" Ailsie, the old nurse ushered in——The Rev. Peter Mc. Howler.

Janet rose and curtsied, in the hope of avoiding, by an assumption of deep deference, the (to her) odious necessity of shaking hands with her 'braw wooer'; but the device failed *in toto*, for looking upon that curtsy, performed in the olden style, with her hands folded before her, as a touching proof of admiration and humility, he caught both her hands in his, and drawing her towards the light Ailsie had placed on the table; he said, while he gazed into her face with a (to her) revolting fondness :—

"Na, na, Janet lassie! na mair o' that between us; gie your bonnie loof freely where ye has gien yer heart, and remember that though it is wisely ordained ye suld aye be the weaker vessel, yet for that very reason is it my place to gie honour to ye; and tak courage, lassie, and remember that sic as ye are, ye were made to be a

help-meet for sic as I am, and that the deep love I feel for you, raises you to my ain level."

As he spoke, he tried to draw her towards him, and to fold her in his arms. Now Janet not only possessed a fund of maiden modesty and maiden pride, but her heart was full of another. She contrasted the raw-boned, hollow-cheeked, rough-spoken man before her, with his oblique vision, his long projecting teeth, his shaggy red hair, his high shoulders, and his knock knees—with the perfect features, the soft delusive eyes, the fair locks, the graceful military carriage, and the bewitching voice and manner of the stranger; and as she did so, she shrank from the enamoured Peter, not merely with fear and maiden modesty, but with a good deal of pride and anger.

Awed a little by the flash of her eye and the dignity of her manner, the Rev. Peter became more formal, and said: "I like ye none the waur, lassie, that ye are nae lightly won, but when ye ken me better, ye'll ken that I'm na' treefling wi' ye; but mane a' ye or yer friends can wish. In

short, lassie, I'm here the night, uneasy at not seeing you a' at the kirk and at the manse, it is true; but auld Ailsie has told me a' aboot the occident, and sae seeing ye for the first time alane, I'll e'en tak this opportunity o' telling you mysel that it's my feixed intention to mak you Mistress Mc. Howler."

"Then," said Janet, nettled at this presumption, "I'll e'en tak this opportunity o' telling you, Sir, that there maun be twa words to that bargain, and that there's naething in the warld could tempt me to encourage your suit or to accept yer offer. And mair, Sir, it gies me the less pain to tell you this, because ye hae made sae unco sure o' my acceptance, and seem to think ye'd be conferring an honour; when to my mind yer asking ain, and that na' a sma' ain. Gude night, Sir!" said Janet, curtsying, "it ill becomes Macauley's dochter to be holding converse wi' a gentleman on sic a soobject alane at this hour o' the night."

Janet passed the astounded wooer with a

haughty sweep, sailed out of the room, and retired to her small dormitory inside her aunt's bed-room.

Mc. Howler remained a little while indignant and amazed ; then decided in his own mind that she could not be in earnest—she, the timid girl, whom he had fancied so much in awe of him, to presume to rate and to refuse him thus ! Oh, it must be some woman trick to try him ; but it shouldn't make a fool of him ; he'd have her yet, but in his own way ; he'd stoop to no woman. And so resolving, he left the house, mounted his horse, and returned home, more in love than ever !

## CHAPTER III.

Miss Grizzie Macauley, who had long been in delicate health, was so severely shaken by her recent accident, that she was obliged to keep her bed for a week, even though being a woman of great fortitude, she was very anxious to make the best of it. Maggie, on the contrary, though much less seriously hurt, was proud to find herself much more showily bruised, and was anxious, like all her class, to make the worst of it; she remained in bed a fortnight, lording it over old Ailsie, and incessantly moaning and bewailing. During the week of Miss Grizzie's confinement,

Gaspar Smiley had called once at Muir House, to inquire after the sufferers. He came not unexpected, for Janet had been dressed and watching for him with a flushed cheek and a beating heart every hour of every day since they had parted. But the Calculator knew the maiden would so watch, and that the longer she watched, the more she would welcome him.

He brought with him grouse and fruit, and other delicacies, as presents for Miss Grizzie; and after a few minutes' visit, during which Janet had done nothing but blush, and tremble, and try to thank him, and Gaspar Smiley had decided she was prettier even than he had thought her before, and in which few minutes he had contrived to condense a good deal of insinuating eloquence and beguiling flattery, he pressed Janet's trembling hand reverentially to his lips, and before she could recover from her confusion, he was gone !

Poor Janet could hardly believe that the visit to which she had so looked forward, was actually



over, and that she had not said one of the many pretty and grateful things she had planned and conned for the occasion. "What an ill-bred simpleton he must think me," she said to herself, while the tears rose to her eyes. "I dare say I shall never see him again, and fool that I was, I did not once catch a glimpse of his beautiful features!"

While poor Janet thus bewailed the result of this interview, the Calculator returned to his gay friends in silent triumph. To none of them had he mentioned his adventure on the moor; they were all profligate, sporting, pleasure-loving men, and he knew that to mention Janet's beauty, would be to secure himself the open or the secret rivalry of all. To him the visit to Muir House had been most satisfactory. He had two objects in making it so brief, the one to prevent all fear or suspicion in Miss Grizzie, the other to awaken in Janet's unsatisfied heart, a restless desire to see him again. He had asked her whether she ever strolled at early morn in the beautiful grove

of Scotch firs at a little distance, or across the fragrant and dewy moor; and he had hinted that he was so keen a sportsman, as to pass her window often before the little white curtain of her bower was drawn aside.

Gaspar Smiley knew how the young girl would recal, and ponder upon his every word, and he doubted not that she would hasten betimes the next morning across the moor, to the grove he had spoken of.

And he was right; a basket on her arm, with which she pretended to have been seeking eggs at a distant cottage, trembling like the tree-tops in the morning breeze, and blushing like the rosy dawn herself, the maiden rose from a mossy bank, by a mountain torrent, which dashed through the grove, and felt rather than saw that Gaspar was by her side, and that his eyes were fixed upon her face.

Quietly he sate beside her, and with the tact and ease of a very clever man of the world, he helped her to recover her composure, to answer

his questions on indifferent subjects, and finally to steal a furtive glance or two at his features. He took care the interview should be too brief to excite anxiety at Moor-House or to take from the gloss of novelty and mystery with which he wished to invest it.

And thus, for many mornings, they met, and both became more enamoured, and Janet grew communicative of truths, and Gaspar of falsehoods. He knew, through her *naïve* report, all her little history—her father's terrors, her mother's timid tenderness, her sister's fond love and soft beauty of person and of mind—the cause of her visit to her aunt, that stern spinster's story and character, her maid Maggie's, and even, though told with much reluctance, many blushes, and not without much of what is vulgarly called 'pumping,' Janet's important conquest of the Rev. Peter Mc. Howler, his offer and her rejection.

In return for these simple records, Gaspar wove a grand romance "founded on fact" though,

of which he was the chivalrous and faultless hero. He made Janet believe, that though wooed by many, lofty, wealthy, and fair, she alone had had power to win his love. He drew vivid and passionate pictures of the union of two hearts, two souls, two destinies—of man's bravery and constant devotion, of woman's lovely and implicit trust. He never spoke actually of marriage it is true; but that, Janet attributed to his extreme delicacy, his fear of startling her. What else could he mean by the beautiful picture of a happy home he had so witchingly portrayed? What other union could be thus complete, thus hallowed to the soul?

An older and more experienced woman would have seen in this omission, reason for much doubt, much circumspection. Poor Janet only saw in it cause for a more entire reliance on one so timid, so delicate, so fearful to alarm her!

But Miss Grizzie and her Maggie grew quite well again, and resumed their wonted occupations and their very early hours. Janet's morning

meetings with her lover were now impossible; but the Calculator had foreseen this, and had provided against it. He had remarked that an old gnarled, moss-grown, sturdy apple-tree, grew against the wall, in which Janet's little window was placed; and that its knotted joints and gnarled arms formed a safe descent from her little bower. Janet, full of romance, innocence, and trusting love, was then easily persuaded, after her aunt had locked her, (as she always did,) into her little room, when the whole household were asleep, to avail herself of the sort of ladder the old apple-tree formed, to step lightly through the little garden, and let herself noiselessly out upon the moonlit moor, where the wily Gaspar awaited her.

And oh, those moonlit meetings! with what passion did they fill the lover's plotting heart! with what delicious tenderness the simple Janet's bosom! Wrapped in his cloak, his arm round her slight waist, her beautiful head on his shoulder, and the moon lighting up her dark passionate

eyes, her perfect features, and her flaxen hair, while the regular outline of his handsome face and close-curling locks were softened by the silver light: a painter might have vainly sought a fairer Psyche or a nobler Mars.

Poor Janet! she knew it must end, but she knew not how; she thought they would be parted, for it was within a few days of her return home; but she believed Gaspar would ere long conquer all the obstacles and mysterious impediments to which he had alluded, and come boldly to her Father's house, and ask her hand.

Poor Janet! she stole to her last moonlit meeting with her lover with a heavy heart and eyes red with weeping. She had not only received a stern letter from her Father, to announce his coming to fetch her home the next morning; but had received a sharp rebuke for her boldness in dismissing Mc. Howler as a suitor, instead of referring him to her Father; an assurance that that Father would never see

her the wife of any other man—that the insolence and ill-treatment of which the Rev. Peter had bitterly complained, had not altered her lover's views—and that therefore directly she returned home, she must prepare for her marriage, unworthy as she was of so great an honour, and such distinguished good fortune; Mc. Howler being, not only one of the 'few,' the 'elect,' the predestined to salvation, but of a family coeval with the Macauleys, and one which had often intermarried with them; to say nothing of his being a man of substance, and able to maintain a daughter of the Macauleys as their Father could not, namely, like their great foremithers, who were leddies indeed of yore.

This terrible letter, which Janet drew from her trembling bosom, and which Gaspar read with well-assumed horror and dismay by the bright moonlight, was all he required. He knew this was the last night Janet could meet him thus; she was become essential to his comfort, and he had resolved on carrying her off. He was pre-

pared accordingly; but this letter saved him a world of trouble. He drew a vivid picture of Janet (whose dread of her Father he knew to be unbounded,) torn for ever from love and him, and forced by that austere fanatic into the arms of Mc. Howler. As Janet shuddered and drew closer to him, he half led, half bore her, insensibly, a little further from the Moor House, and towards a spot where a travelling chariot and four post-horses stood in the shadow of a clump of fir trees.

"Janet," he said, "there is no help for it—you must fly with me, my love! my idol! Yonder stands the carriage with which I had intended to pursue my solitary way southwards, if indeed the anguish of my soul did not drive me, on leaving you, to do some desperate deed." Janet shuddered. "It will be so, my love," he cried, "if now we part. The bride of Mc. Howler will hear even among her wedding peal, the knell of her first, her only love! Hark! hark!" he added, seeing that as he tried to force



her on, a maiden instinct made her still hang back—"I heard steps, voices, Janet; we are pursued!" he cried, looking behind him, and lifting her light form in his arms—"That tall figure, with streaming white hair, it is——"

"It must be my Father!" cried Janet, and fainted on his bosom; and when she came to herself, which she did not do, so as to be thoroughly conscious for about half an hour, she found herself in the travelling chariot, in Gaspar Smiley's arms, borne rapidly along a turnpike road, by four fleet horses; and the moon which shone on Gaspar Smiley's face, shewed that though his eyes were full of tears of passion, there was a curl of triumph on his lip; but Janet only saw the water sparkle in his fine eyes, and while her own tears fell like rain, she hid her blushing face in his bosom.

#### CHAPTER IV.

And thus was poor Janet, almost without her own consent or co-operation, lost and won. The 'Calculator' was not a man to let trifles, as he called them, rob him of the costly advantage he had so long plotted and toiled for. A lover of feeling, honour, and real tenderness, would even yet have been moved by the rare mixture of innocence and confidence, passion and purity, maiden caution and inexperienced trust, Janet's conduct now betrayed. Not so Gaspar Smiley. The first time she consented to meet him alone, his plan was formed; and from that moment, she was his destined victim.

Alone, helpless, in his power, and with no shield which could avail her, with such a man, Janet was lost ! And for the sake of his own comfort, which still was a good deal wrapped up in hers, Gaspar Smiley was as tender, as devoted, and as much in love as before her downfall. And seeing this, and getting by degrees a little more reconciled to the loss of her self-respect, and more entirely devoted to her destroyer, Janet dried her tears, and tried to be a cheerful companion. She did not fancy for one moment that she was the victim of any plot ; she believed that accident alone had thrown her into her lover's power, and that his passionate love had been too strong for principle, honour, her appeals, or the voice of pity. She persuaded herself that the mysterious impediments, to which he had always alluded, still existed in full force, to prevent their marriage ; but that of course he would now resolve to conquer them.

At the first important town at which they stopped, Gaspar had surrounded his victim with

milliners and dress-makers. Vanity, the great tempter, had been called into play ; the passion for dress, long secretly encouraged by her Mother, burst into bloom ; Janet surveyed her uncommon beauty, set off by gay and modish attire. She forgot, as the elegant bonnet was placed upon her head, that that head ought to be bowed in deep shame. The embroidered glove concealed the absence of that ring which could alone have hallowed all these gifts. In the gay silk stocking and the little French shoe, Janet tripped thoughtlessly along the path of shame and ruin ; and the glittering trinkets and gay gems with which Gaspar delighted to set off her beauty, dazzled her so that she forgot she had bought them (trash as they were) with a jewel worth more than all the diamonds of Golconda, and the pearl which is above all price—the pearl of purity and virtue. In a dream of luxury, and love, and short-lived joy, Gaspar bore his victim to the Continent, and fixing on a city in Italy little frequented by the English, he

gave out that Janet was his sister, and still deeply enamored of her beauty, charmed with her *naïveté*, and flattered by her devotion, he engaged masters to cultivate her great natural talents for music, singing, and dancing—had her taught Italian, which she acquired with great ease ; and took a pride in introducing her into society, where her rusticity (fast wearing off though) was accounted for by her being from the far North, and where her beauty, so soft and ethereal, when compared with the dark marked faces around her, caused a degree of wonder and enthusiasm among the vehement Italians, which was very gratifying to Gaspar Smiley, who knew that the idol of every ball, the inspiration of every poet, and the Queen of every fête, was the slave of his every whim, his willing victim, and his worshipper.

From this dream of guilty rapture, and this life of ambrosial, and, alas ! remorseless sin, Janet was however soon to awake. On her beauty, her vivacity, and her popularity, Gaspar's

love depended ; and on that love hung not merely her happiness, but her very existence in the new and luxurious life to which she was now quite accustomed. But Retribution came with giant strides. At a fancy ball, where, dressed in the Highland costume, Janet was the object of universal admiration, and therefore of peculiar tenderness to Gaspar, a sudden fainting fit alarmed the company, and compelled her 'Brother' to carry her home. Several days of severe indisposition followed this swoon ; Gaspar grew impatient, but Janet could not rally. Every day stole something from her bloom, her embonpoint, and her lively spirits. Every attempt to rouse herself ended in deeper dejection. Every remark of Gaspar's on her altered appearance, temper, and manner, was followed by hysterical fits of weeping. Gaspar, into whose calculations no such annoyances as these had ever entered, left her to her own sad thoughts, and went in search of flirtation among the Italian ladies of his acquaintance. In solitude, Con-

science awoke, and awaking, woke Remorse. In her hours of health, love, and vanity, Janet had not thought of her God, her parents, her sister, her blighted name, her deep disgrace, her false position, and the lie she was acting in passing as Gaspar's spotless sister, Now that bodily illness made a gap in the fence around her, in rushed the hell-hounds Remorse, Despair, Jealousy, Self-Contempt, and slinking Shame, to gnaw her very heart. Pale cheeks, blistered with tears, eyes swollen with weeping, neglected attire, and words of bitter self-reproach, had no interest for Gaspar; they awoke nothing but impatience, anger, and contempt. The Calculator reckoned that the pleasure of his life with Janet was over; he had no intention of sharing the pain, that always follows in the wake of illicit love. He soon discovered too, what the young girl in her ignorance had not even suspected, that there was a cause for her bodily ailments and mental dejection, which might, if discovered, bring him into trouble; in short, that Janet would become a

mother. And he resolved to quit Pavia before any suspicion of the kind was awakened, in any of those who looked on her as his sister.

As an explanation for his sudden departure, he gave out that the air of Italy was too enervating for the Scotch constitution of Janet, and as Janet, restless, as the wretched always are, was willing to depart, Gaspar bore her back to England. He took lodgings for her in a cottage in the suburbs of London—provided her with all he deemed necessary—instructed the woman of the house to break to her by degrees her situation, and to comfort her if possible ; and then returned to his old haunts, his old pursuits. And the year which had been to Janet so fraught with wild love, guilty rapture, mental anguish, and bodily sufferings, was to him nothing but an ordinary year, beginning certainly with some unusual excitement, productive of some unwonted pleasure and some interest, but ending, summed up the Calculator, “as those things always do, in becoming a deuced bore.”



## CHAPTER V.

The Calculator had no wish to drive Janet to despair—to induce her to commit some rash act, which would get into the newspapers, and make their connexion public, perhaps, to his discomfort and disgrace. So he framed adroit excuses for his long absences, visited her occasionally, and appeared to love her still. He would, perhaps, have spent more time with her, but for her constant and passionate entreaties to him to make her a wife before she became a mother. These entreaties bored him, irritated, enraged him, even; but this, he took care not to betray; he

affected to share her wish that the obstacles to their union could be removed—implied an intention of taking steps for that purpose—calculated well—and left her with the hope (never expressed, but adroitly suggested) that he would return to her in time to secure the legitimacy of her child.

And in the midst of that false hope, of which even she lost sight, in the agonies unspeakable and protracted which awaited her, her boy was born.

For some time the delicate young mother, almost a child herself in years and in experience, lay exhausted and unconscious, all around her prophesying a speedy release from all her troubles; but she had much yet to suffer and to expiate, and she was spared. The birth of her child gave the wretched Janet a new interest in life; the feelings of maternity once aroused in her heart, she soon recovered her health, her beauty, and some degree of serenity. She longed to show her baby to its father, she felt sure that the sight of such a treasure would even add to

the eagerness (in which, poor fool ! she fully believed) of Gaspar's efforts to conquer the mysterious obstacles to their union, and proclaim her his, for ever !

The little Gaspar (as she hastened to have him christened,) was indeed a child of uncommon size and beauty, and in his infant features, before many weeks had passed, the most unprejudiced beholder could have traced a strong likeness to his father. He had his mother's large soft black eyes, and small classic mouth ; but in every other lineament, and above all in his broad chest, large proportions, and bold front, he was a miniature Gaspar. Janet had expected so much delight, surprise, and even rapture in her lover, on his first view of his child, that even a warm-hearted father would have disappointed her expectations, and of course the cold Calculator fell very far short of them indeed ! However, he assumed as much paternal pride and pleasure as he could, and Janet herself was looking so delicately lovely in her new character, and little matron cap, with

its white rosettes, that Gaspar Smiley felt some return of affection for the mother, though his cold heart recognised none for the child."

Janet continued for some months in her new abode, always expecting, always hoping that every visit Gaspar paid her would end in the realization of her hopes, and enable her to announce to her father, her mother, and her sister, that she was not only married, but married to a gentleman and the first of men !

Since she had been a mother herself, she had been ten times more alive than before to the misery, her flight, her probable disgrace, and her uncertain fate, must have entailed on her parents—her poor mother especially—that dear mother, ever so indulgent, so fond, so proud of her daughter. Alas ! on that guilty daughter's heart began to awake a miserable consciousness of the anguish she must have cost that devoted mother, and she shuddered as she thought of the possible effect of the shock of her elopement on the shattered frame of the poor invalid. What, too, might she

(meek sufferer) have had to bear from the wrath of a father who would trace his daughter's ruin to her mother's vanity and weakness. In the excitement of love, vanity, new scenes, and Gaspar's passionate fondness, Janet had never thought of this; and in her subsequent state of bodily and mental dejection, she had been too much engrossed by her own miseries, to feel even for her mother—but now she knew by experience what a mother's love is, she pined to see, to kneel to that beloved, gentle parent, and concealing from her the disgraceful knowledge of what she had been, bid her welcome in Mrs. Smiley, the daughter who had realized her most ambitious hopes and fondest expectations, in marrying not merely the object of her love, but a gentleman and man of fortune and fashion !

Poor, poor Janet ! as she thought upon these things, her anxiety for Gaspar's realization of her hopes grew so intense, that had she known where to find him, she would have set out at once, to kneel to him, to implore him by his love for

her and their little Gaspar, at least privately to bestow upon her the sanction of his name, and

‘That little circle in whose magic round  
All earth has left of happiness is bound.’

How the mocking fiends, who hover around us, kindred with those in Gaspar’s cold, bad heart, must have revelled in Janet’s eager watch for Gaspar’s coming—her restless impatience, and the half-audible prayer she breathed by her baby’s cot—she, the unwedded mother, for the hallowed name of wife! . . .

## CHAPTER VI.

Mrs. Perk, the woman in whose house Janet lodged, was a tolerably civil, kind-hearted person, who having been in her youth deceived and abandoned, (which she chose to call being 'left a lone widow,') had but one object in life, the making, as she said, 'both ends meet,' by always having her first floor, her second floor, her parlours, and her front and back attics, profitably let. The flaw in her own escutcheon did not allow her to be very particular, in the most rigid sense of the word; but she found it answer to take none but

quiet regular lodgers, who at least could give good references as to being 'sure pay.' To such she was moderate in her charges, and civil in her behaviour; and Janet was indebted to Mrs. Perk for many little kindnesses, not included in the rent, nor charged for as extras in the bill. Among others was the occasional loan of an illustrated weekly paper, which Janet read listlessly through as she rocked her child's cradle, and which she did, not to seem ungrateful to Mrs. Perk, but often without taking in two consecutive lines.

One day Mrs. Perk brought Janet in several of these old papers—back numbers, which she had not seen; one in particular, in which there was an account of a horrible murder, with an appalling succession of graphic illustrations of all the most dreadful details of the planning and executing the atrocious outrage; and which Mrs. Perk, with the appetite for horrors common to the vulgar, pointed out particularly to Janet. Janet gazed, read, and shuddered; and as her



child still slept, and she was quite alone, she continued to read on mechanically through several articles, when all at once she started, grew pale, nervously clutched the paper, and perused an article headed "SEDUCTION," with distended eyes, and lips apart; then letting it fall from her nerveless hand, she buried her face in the coverlid of her child's cot, and burst into a passion of tears. The article which had so disturbed poor Janet, and which was in a paper dated two months previous to the time at which she met with it, ran as follows :—

"Yesterday, a wild-looking, elderly Scotchman, evidently more than half insane, and attired in deep mourning, having with him his daughter, a beautiful girl, apparently about sixteen, also in the deepest mourning, presented himself before the Lord Mayor, to ask his Lordship's advice under the following distressing circumstances. It appears, as far as we could gather from the incoherent statement of the old man, whose narrative was broken by sobs, tears,

fierce anathemas, and gloomy texts of Scripture of a Calvinistic tendency, that he was a minister of the Kirk of Scotland residing in the Highlands, in the remote and picturesque village of —————; that he had a wife and two daughters—the eldest sixteen, the other (the beautiful girl weeping beside him) not quite fifteen; that during a visit to her aunt, who lived in a still wilder and more remote district, and whom he described as a maiden lady of matchless virtues—one of the chosen few—his eldest daughter, though sought in marriage by a Presbyterian divine—a shining light, a great and gifted preacher—had eloped with some unknown and profligate “son of Belial”—that having some reason to believe that her seducer might be the young Lord E——, to whom a neighbouring shooting box belonged, he had sought him in Edinburgh, where he was then staying; he had found him a married and apparently a sobered man, and had heard from him that he had not been at G—— for two years, and had let his box

during the grouse season to a party of young officers, who were now dispersed. He either did not or would not know their names, or their places of abode ; “but they are sons of Satan, and their abode, be it now where it will, will be hell-fire before long,” cried the old man, much excited. “I returned,” he added, “to a disgraced and wretched home, for I had news at Edinburgh that my wife was dying. I purposed setting out again in search of my lost sheep of the House of Israel, when a brain fever laid me on a bed, from which I did not rise for some months. And now I am come to ask you, for I hear you can tell me—and woe unto you and yours if you tell me not—where is my child, and what punishment is to be inflicted on her destroyer? I will persecute him even unto death in this life; and in the life to come”—added the old man, wildly laughing and tossing his arms aloft—“his portion is the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched.”

His Lordship listened with much sympathy to

the old man's story, which his daughter, who had nearly fainted more than once, corroborated with many tears. The name of the party (a highly respectable one) was unwillingly revealed; but motives of delicacy induce us to withhold it. His Lordship expressed his regret, that the case, interesting and distressing as it was, was one of too common occurrence, and that the ignorance of the father as to the seducer's name, rendered it impossible for him to do anything for him. The old man upon this becoming much excited, and anathematizing all present, even his Lordship himself, as a son of Belial, a whited sepulchre, a child of perdition, &c. &c. &c., he was removed to the outer room, and a hackney-coach was sent to convey him and his daughter to an inn, called the Yorkshire Stingo, New-road, whence he came. His young daughter gracefully, and with many tears, thanked his Lordship for his attention, assuring him that her sister's flight, and her mother's consequent death, had affected her father's brain, and begging him to excuse his

violence, as he was become in some degree an irresponsible being. The Lord Mayor kindly advised the young lady to have her father watched closely—to return with him to his own home as soon as possible—and with regard to her sister, he advised advertisements to be inserted in the public prints, such as she might understand herself, should they meet her eye. And that minute enquiries should be made at Lord E——’s box, about the members of the shooting party who had spent the autumn there. The young lady then thanked his Lordship, and returned with her father (who had sunk into complete dejection and apathy), to the Yorkshire Stingo.

## CHAPTER VII.

“The wages of sin is death!” murmured Janet to herself, still sobbing in wild despair by her infant’s side—her face hidden in his bed-clothes. But oh, that the wages of my sin should be my mother’s death!—my dear, kind, gentle mother! so proud, so fond of your lost, your wretched Janet! Oh, God!” she cried, starting to her feet, and almost frenzied by remorse,—“and you were in your cold grave, poor mother! your broken heart had ceased to beat for ever, at that very time when your guilty, wretched daughter was reveling in luxury—fed with praise—inflated with vanity, and laying up for herself an everlasting portion

of despair, remorse, and anguish ! Poor child ! poor outcast ! thou heir of shame and sin !” she added, bitterly, turning to her sleeping boy—“thou nameless one !—thou wilt one day, scorned by a bitter world, curse in thy blighted heart thy guilty mother ;—but thou didst not curse me, mother. Thou best, thou kindest one !”

Janet sank on the floor ; busy memory brought back a thousand touching proofs of that mother’s tenderness, her long suffering, her cruel fate, her pride in, her hopes for, her daughters—how she had pictured the days when wedded to some loved and noble gentleman, Janet should receive her own mother in some lovely home, such as that mother had known in her youth. How at Aberdeen, or Edinburgh, they would together seek, what seemed in memory’s tablets such fairy-scenes. How the mother would live over her own palmy days of youth and beauty again, in her daughter’s triumphs ; and what joy uncontrolled, when, instead of the stern and terrible Macauley, the

master of the house, where the mother was to be so honoured and so welcome a guest, would be the young, handsome, generous, and devoted object of Janet's first love.—Nobly-born, wealthy, liberal, kind—a son in every sense to his Janet's mother! How many little plans had they formed—how many little schemes projected, for one visit to Aberdeen or Edinburgh, where the mother prophesied, what the daughter readily believed, that such lovers would be rife, and that Janet would have only too many to choose from. Vain, vain dreams! how had it all ended? There in the dust grovelled Janet, the disgraced, the seduced, the lost one! There hung neglected, wild, and steeped in bitter tears, the fair abundant tresses the mother had so proudly braided, and so fondly prized! Swollen, blinded with tears of shame and remorse, were those black eyes the mother had so loved to look on, and which were to have won so proud and happy a destiny. Blistered with tears those fair cheeks—bowed that gracefully haughty head—and the mother



who was to have been so loved, so cherished, so fêted, and whose autumn was to have atoned so brightly for a blighted spring and a stormy summer—where was she? As Janet thought upon her broken heart, her cold and distant grave, and the keen anguish that had cut short her thread of life so suddenly, she felt an eager desire to go to the inn where her father and sister had been, and make what enquiries she could of the people who had seen them; but, rising suddenly with this intention, the anguish of her mind acting upon a frame exhausted with grief, overcame her. Everything in the room seemed to swim round with her, her heart ceased to beat, her eyes closed—and sinking on the floor, the wretched girl remained some few minutes in a happy state of insensibility.

## CHAPTER VIII.

When Janet awoke, to misery and remorse, she looked out of her little window, and perceived that the sun shone brightly, as though in mockery of her grief, and that all without was fair and bright, though all within was gloom and grief—she took her infant in her arms—for the first time she dressed it in its smart hood and gay cloak, without one feeling of pride in its beauty—wrapped her shawl around her, and put on her bonnet, without even looking in the glass—(so self-forgetful does true misery make us)—and quietly gliding down stairs, she was gone.

The youth, the beauty, and the evident distress of the young Mother, added to the remarkable loveliness of the fair boy, crowing in her arms, attracted so much attention, and caused poor Janet to be so much followed and insulted, that though she grudged a creature so vile as she now felt herself to be, any luxury, she found it necessary to take a hackney cab from the first stand, and throwing herself back in this conveyance, she hid her beauty and her grief from all the idlers around her. She reached the Yorkshire Stingo, dismissed her cab, and had an interview with the Landlady. That important person, in all the glory of a new cap, was much too grand to remember any thing of "company" so long passed away. "We're always so full, Mem, and it's such an intermitting succession of visitors, that it's a mortal impossibility for me to keep 'em all in my poor 'ead, which is well nigh beside itself as it is," she said.

Seeing Janet's great distress, however, Mrs. Tipple kindly offered to call the chambermaid,

“who might possibly, having no important concerns of her own, remember more of other people’s.” This girl, a country lass, and very good-humoured, distinctly remembered an old man and a young lady in deep mourning—that the old man kept his bed two or three days, had leeches on his temples, and a blister besides—that the young lady was almost always crying, and that they went away before the young lady thought her ‘Pa’ fit to travel; but that he was such a resolute, terrible old man, Miss was obliged to give in—that this was about four months back; and that was all she could remember, except that she knowed Miss sent several letters to the newspapers, because she got her the post-office orders to pay for the advertisements inside.

This was all Janet could learn; and with a sinking heart, she turned away, resolving to walk to the next coach-stand. As her child was crying, and perhaps hungry, Janet entered a baker’s shop, and asked leave to go into the

back parlour to nurse her infant, ordering two buns and a glass of water for herself. The woman kindly consented, and Janet took her seat at a little white-curtained window, which looked into the shop.

Presently a cab, a gentleman's cab, drove up to the door. Janet looked, unseen, from her hiding-place. Her heart stood still; a gentleman sprang out, handing playfully out of the cab, and into the shop, a very pretty young brunette, with brown eyes, white teeth, and a gay laugh.

"Dinner ready?" he said, "Mrs. Gubbins," as he went up-stairs with the damsel; "Come, be punctual, we're going to the play, and my country cousin wishes to hear the overture. Now, Lucy dear, make haste and change your dress."

"Everything's ready, Major!" said Mrs. Gubbins. "Rachel, dish up the Major's dinner; I'll take up the soup."

"Who are that gentlemen and lady?" faltered

Janet. Alas! the former she knew but too well!—It was Gaspar Smiley!

“Ah! you may well ask!” said Mrs. Gubbins; “he’s the finest man as ever stepped, and the pleasantest you’d meet on a summer’s day. It’s Major Smiley. It’s a pity he’s a little too gay, and too fond of the gals; but then they won’t leave him alone. He’s lodged off and on here for years—and always some new sweetheart or other ater him—sisters and cousins, as he calls ’em—a sight on ’em. It’s no use to be over nice or over wise—‘least said, soonest mended’—‘a still tongue makes a wise head.’ But I believe that Miss now up-stairs aint no more his cousin nor I am. But there he is the takingest, freest spoken, most liberalest gentleman going; and he’ll have sowed his wild oats some day, and then he tells me he’ll marry an heiress and reform; and I’m a lone widow, and haven’t no daughters for him to captiwate, and he always minds appearances and keeps good hours, and pays like a prince; and so I’ve no right to doubt

the wenches being his cousins, and sisters, and all that. And now I must run up with the dinner, and fasten Miss Jones's dress.' Don't 'ee hurry. Thank 'ee, that's all right; what a noble baby! You must be proud on him, I'm sure!"

So saying, Rachel came in with the soup, Mrs. Gubbins took it up-stairs—and Janet tottered to the coach-stand close by, and threw herself into the first cab she came to.

Now did the cup of her despair seem full indeed! Now did she see herself the lost, the wretched, the betrayed outcast she really was! What hope for the future, what comfort in the past! And oh, for the present, what bitter gnawing jealousy of Gaspar's new victim. And so she was then herself but one of many! And he had never meant to marry her, and she was nothing to him but the toy of an hour, though for him she had sacrificed all peace and self-respect on earth—all right to hope for a portion in heaven! For him had she broken

her mother's heart—driven her father to madness—blighted her young sister's spotless name—and made herself not merely an outcast, but the mother of an outcast—one who perhaps might be cursed with keen sensibilities and proud aspirations, and find himself rudely thrust out of all honourable fellowship, because he was the bastard son of a guilty mother.

“And shall I eat of his bread, drink of his cup, and grovel on, in a vile luxury, existing on his charity?” she thought, wringing her hands wildly; “now, too, that another has usurped the little hold I had once on his affections—now, that he doubtless wearies of my wretched face, and only visits me through a miserable compassion! Never! I will toil for thee, my poor, poor boy! I will rend off this disgraceful finery, and go forth in the only garb really mine, (and that I have indeed disgraced) the dress in which he took me from innocence and home. He shall never see me more!”

Gaspar Smiley was to dine with Janet on the



following day. It was not true that the sensual Calculator was weary of her; he, now that her beauty was more than restored, preferred her to his new victim, Lucy, or to any other woman he knew. But the excitement of pursuit and novelty, the exclusive tenderness of his love was gone; and though he admired Janet still, she was no longer essential to his happiness. However, it was a blow even to his hard worldly heart, when, intending to spend a pleasant evening with Janet, and to take her to a private box at —— theatre, he found a letter addressed to himself on the table, and ascertained that Janet and her child were gone, none knew whither; and that she had left behind her all his gifts, dresses, trinkets, and ornaments, taking with her only the clothes she wore when he carried her off, and a few articles essential to her child's comfort.

Mrs. Perk, who had been busy at the wash-tub, was not even aware of her lodger's departure. After the first shock, the Calculator decided that in all probability he should easily trace her

retreat, and if not, that he was quietly rid of a future nuisance and expense. He ordered up the dinner he had expected to share with Janet, and after he had fortified himself with two or three glasses of wine, he took out her letter and read as follows:—

“When you receive this, Gaspar, I shall be gone; the wretched victim you are weary of, will offend your sight no more. I shall have thrown myself on a cold world, less cold to me now than the heart I once so fondly believed my own. I am very, very miserable—very hopeless—very destitute; but I am not so mean, so abject, as to share with others your guilty love and its vile wages. Almost broken-hearted I went out yesterday—for I learnt by chance from a public paper that I had broken my mother’s heart, and driven my father mad; and while I writhed under my new remorse, I saw you gaily sporting with another! Oh, Gaspar! you know not, you cannot know the deep, deep love you have out-

raged, the faith you have trampled on, the truth you have betrayed ; and that you may never feel one particle of the desolation and despair, now my portion for ever, is the last prayer of one who has loved you with a love so much akin to idolatry, that it has brought down on her the vengeance of one who is a jealous God. Farewell for ever.

“JANET.”

Even Gaspar Smiley could not help feeling a little uncomfortable at the perusal of his victim's dejected and hopeless adieu. But he comforted himself with the idea that it was entirely her own doing, and then he calculated the probabilities that her youth and beauty would secure her a protector of some kind, or if she were indeed too virtuous for such a contingency, that at the first approach of want, particularly to her child, she would seek him out. She knew his address at his military club, and he resolved besides to leave it with Mrs. Perk, in case the wretched girl

inquired for him there. He won that lady's good opinion, and what he cared more for, her good word, by expressing the greatest distress and alarm about Janet—owning with a candour, which Mrs. Perk thought most becoming in such a gentleman, that he had been a little too attentive to a certain fair cousin of his, and that Mrs. Macauley had discovered it somehow, and in a fit of jealousy had left him without giving him any clue to her retreat. He promised Mrs. Perk a handsome reward in case that, through her inquiries of the neighbours, or at the adjoining coach-stands, she could discover Janet's hiding-place. He left all her clothes, &c. &c., in Mrs. Perk's care, and having remunerated her most handsomely, and feed the maid-of-all-work to her heart's content, he, the heartless, the cruel seducer, left them with an impression that he was the 'kindest, feelingest, liberalest man in the world,' and that Mrs. Macauley was the 'ungratefulest, jealousyest, provokingest, little fool as ever was, to vex and forsake such a noble gentleman,

and that it was a crool shame to hide away the blessed babe from sich a father, as many a lawful son couldn't boast of.'

Oh, this world! this world! such are thy judgments!

## CHAPTER IX.

Poor Janet suffered much, in her desolate wanderings about the great city, where she felt she had not one friend. In the clothes she now wore, those in which she had left Muir House, and which were the only ones she considered she had a right to, Janet found a long forgotten guinea, a gift of her poor mother's, and a little gold vinaigrette, also a relic of Mrs. Macauley's gay days. Janet tried to pass the guinea at a shop, where she stopped to buy her child a roll. The baker refused it, but advised her to take it next door, to a jeweller, pawn-broker, &c. &c. The

pawn-broker advised her to pledge it, which she did for fifteen shillings ! and her little gold vinaigrette for a pound more, and with this money the wretched girl, after many vain efforts at finding a lodging, was received in the miserable little garret in which we find her ; and here she contrived, by taking in needle-work, to keep herself and her child alive. No privations would ever have induced Janet to make her retreat known to Major Smiley. Months passed on ; and though whenever she took home her ill-paid work, she was followed and tempted with offers of all kinds, she remained honest and hard-working, and found in her beautiful boy all the happiness she could now hope for. But little Gaspar was taken suddenly and alarmingly ill ; Janet was frantic, she knew not what to do, to whom to fly ! The mistress of the house in which she lodged had had many children, she advised her to send for a neighbouring medical man. He looked round the wretched little room, took a pinch of snuff, and said he saw little hope—perhaps he meant

little hope of being paid. He ordered some medicine, and hurried away. Janet saw, with terror unspeakable, that her child grew hourly worse and worse; the woman of the house, whom she called on in her anguish, asked her if the child had a father living. Janet owned he had.

"A gentleman?" said the woman.

"Yes," blushed Janet.

"Ah, I thought so," said Mrs. Pratt: "In your place I'd fetch him, if he's in London; he must be proud of such a lovely child, and if the doctors see a chance of being paid, they'll not be so ready to give him over."

Janet begged Mrs. Pratt to watch by her child while she went out for half an hour. She flew to the military club, where, as chance would have it, Major Smiley was just stopping to dine. He was springing from his cab, and about to ascend the steps, when Janet seized him by the arm. A few words told him she was not, as he at first feared, insane; he saw he could not evade her without a



scene, and to avoid one, he turned up a bye-street, and accompanied her to her wretched lodging.

He spoke so kindly, and seemed to take so deep an interest in the little sufferer, that he soon won Mrs. Pratt's good opinion. He sent for a doctor, who tried the usual remedies for inflammation of the lungs (the child's complaint), but without avail. In a few days little Gaspar was given over, and Janet's despair knew no bounds; then it was that Mrs. Pratt, seeing, as she said, that do what they would, he could only die, suggested to Janet some remedies, which in a similar case had cured her own last-born. Janet listened with a renewal of hope; the remedies were tried; all the time of their operation Janet spent on her knees in fervent prayer. Her boy was saved!

He was still a little delicate from this attack, at the time when, remembering Janet's cure of her own child, Gaspar Smiley, who had occasionally called on her at dusk, since his discovery of her retreat, went to her to beg her to do her best to save Lady Fathom's little boy in a similar attack.

We have seen the result of that experiment; and we now find poor Janet in her miserable little room, hard at work, at the ill-paid, wearisome toil of shirt-making; a piece of dry bread, and a cup of wretched-looking tea, without sugar or milk beside her, but a little saucepan of excellent new milk and sago on the fire for her darling boy. The wretched little room was very neat and clean, and though poor Janet wore the very clothes in which she had left her aunt's house, the red boddice, (now much faded,) the full short skirt, and the dark stockings, alas! interwoven with many darns; her child was exquisitely clean, and attired in a neat and almost fanciful dress of her own making, but of the style and material worn by the children of a better class. And while poor Janet toiled with aching eyes, strained neck, and weary spirit, at "band and gusset and seam," she forced herself to warble a lively air to cheer the little convalescent, who sate on the floor, playing with all the toys the poor mother could muster for him.

Janet had contrived, through a neighbour who kept a chandler's shop in her native village, to convey a letter to her sister Alice ; not to tell her of her poverty and distress, but of her misery and repentance ; to ask a few details of her poor mother's death and her father's present state, and humbly to beg her sister not to despise her as one who had sinned with deliberate intention, or was living in idleness and luxury on the wages of crime. She gave a rapid and touching sketch of her unpremeditated elopement, with its unforeseen but, alas ! inevitable result. She described her child as the only tie that bound her to earth, and added, that since she had been convinced that its father would never make her his wife, she had lived alone with her boy, and on the produce of her industry. There was something very affecting in the meek and almost humble tone of Janet's explanation, to a sister whom in days of yore she had always treated with the affectionate superiority of a senior and a more daring spirit. But it was now the fallen one addressing a vir-

tuous maiden, and Janet felt that there is no arbitrary distinction of rank half so powerful as the line between the woman who has sinned and the maiden who has not.

On the very day on which the reader finds Janet at work in her little garret, she had received a letter from her sister, kind, very kind, but there was something in it that made Janet feel tenfold her misery and her shame. After bewailing with her, her miserable position, Alice, said :—

“Since you are aware of the fact, sister, it were vain for me to attempt to conceal that our poor mother died broken-hearted ; but on her death-bed she forgave you, Janet, and bade me tell you, if we ever met, that to her own folly and vanity, in talking to you so much of the gay world and its idle follies, its false lovers, and delusive hopes, she attributed your downfall, and her own death. Our father is at length restored to some degree of resignation ; and the blessed counsels and exhortations of his pious friend and fellow-labourer in the vineyard, the Rev. Peter Mc. How-

ler, have done much to calm his spirit. Indeed I must say that at one time he was possessed with a legion of devils, rending and tearing him night and day ; but our excellent friend has cast them out ! You will not be surprised to hear, dear Janet, that I have accepted the offer of this worthy man—this shining light—this candle not hid under a bushel—this city placed on a hill. We are to be married next week, and I think this wedding, so much after his own heart, has consoled our poor father more than anything else since your fall. Our aunt continues much incensed against you ; but is very kind to me, and is to be at my wedding. I enclose two pounds, dear Janet ; would it were fifty. It is a little sum I have saved for you out of my scanty supply for wedding clothes ; and my beloved Peter, to whom I showed your letter, adds another sovereign, his own gift ; and we both think that if you could get your unfortunate child into some infant charitable asylum, or if it should please the Lord to take him to

himself, you might yet return as a lost sheep to the true fold—to live a life of seclusion and repentance under our own eye—to profit by the true teaching of the word from my Peter and our father—if he could be induced to forgive you this trespass, as he ought to do, if he hopes to be forgiven; and thus, dear Janet, you might yet be saved as a brand from the burning—among the remnant of the elect, who will one day form the new Israel. That this may come to pass, and that soon, is, dear Janet, the constant prayer of

Your loving sister,

ALICE MACAULEY."

How mortifying was even the kindness of this letter! Alice, it was evident, (the ductile and the weak,) had now entirely taken the tone and assumed the feelings of those around her—her father, her lover, and her aunt; and Janet felt that she had no longer a sister, in the sweet and intimate sense of that dear relationship. The three sovereigns, much as she needed them, and hard as she must work night and day to earn

even half that sum, sickened her very soul ; but she looked at little Gaspar, and she put them by for his sake.

We have said she was hard at work, so hard indeed, that she did not hear the unusual sound of a man's step on the stairs, nor see her door open, till little Gaspar cried out in alarm ; and then raising her head from her work, Janet saw in the dark, the figure of Gaspar Smiley, wrapped in a large cloak, and his hat slouched over his eyes.

He came kindly up to Janet, who rose to welcome him—took her hand, and sate down beside her.

"You look pale, my poor girl !" he said, gazing kindly at her ; "you work too hard—you live too hard—you did not look thus even when you shared the poor home of such a wretch as Gaspar Smiley."

Janet smiled, a wan smile, very like moon-light on a ruin.

"And little Gaspar, how very thin and ill he looks!"

"What!" cried Janet, clasping her hands and growing first very red and then deadly pale—"do you think Gaspar looks ill? I fancied he was so much better!" And she burst into tears.

"Ah!" said the Calculator, "seeing him constantly, you cannot judge; I never saw a child so altered in my life. Why, he is a shadow to what he was. The fact is, Janet, this poisonous air is killing you both—the boy won't live a month longer here."

"Oh!" cried Janet, "what shall I do?"

"Janet," said the Calculator, "I love my child, and I will not see this; I love you, little as you seem to think it, and though you have acted as if I had been rather wilfully than inevitably your enemy; I love you still, my girl; you cannot know what I may yet be toiling at in order to atone to you for all your sufferings."

Janet looked up at him with something of the gaze of former days.



"I am very unhappy, very weak, very unfortunate," said the Calculator, heaving a sigh, and passing his hand over his eyes; "but I am not the heartless wretch you think me, and time will show, Janet, whether you have done well thus to estrange yourself and our child from me!"

Our child! Janet's eyes swam in tears, and she took Gaspar's hand.

"Now listen, Janet; you are killing yourself, and this poisonous air is destroying our darling. The service you have rendered Lady Fathom has made me very anxious to secure you for a short time in her family, not as a servant (God forbid!) but as a nursery governess, or rather a companion to her little boy."

"And my own darling?" said Janet, almost in anger, letting Gaspar's hand fall.

"Ever hasty, ever distrustful!" said the Calculator; "ever standing in your own light. Am not I the darling's father? Do I not care for him as much as you do, nay more, for I cannot

calmly look on and see the beautiful rose-bud wither. Is he not *our* child?"

"Well!" gasped Janet, impatiently.

"Let me place him, for a short time, a very short time, in a sweet fresh country home, where a pure and bracing air, new milk, constant attention, and the greatest kindness, will soon restore him; and where you can visit him whenever you please."

"And part from him!" sobbed Janet.

"Nay, if you refuse, you will part from him for ever soon. I see by his looks, we shall be only just in time."

Janet shuddered.

Having so placed our darling, you will be free to accept Lady Fathom's offer. And independently of the incalculable benefit the change will be of to our child, there are reasons connected with the future, which make your so doing of great importance to me."

"Oh, I can never part with him!" sobbed Janet, who had caught her boy to her breast,

and was rocking him in her arms, and covering him with kisses.

"But you can see him when you like. Alas ! Janet, do not sacrifice him to such selfish folly. Look"—and he took his little wan hand in his—"he will die, he has no firmness, no flesh, no color—pulse quick and feeble, skin hot and dry !——"

Janet looked at her boy aghast.

"I am anxious about it," said Major Smiley, "because in several cases I have seen such children saved by the course I propose. Besides, Janet, I ought to have a voice in such a matter. You give me little reason to hope I should find much of love, honor, or obedience in you, if some day——"

"Why cannot I go with him into the country ?" asked Janet.

"In the first place, by so doing you would defeat the whole object of his removal. You watch over and spoil him. You are yourself in such bad health, that not to have weaned him yet is to

ensure his destruction ; for that opinion I have the fiat of a first-rate physician. It is a sinful indulgence of your own fondness—at the expense of his life. You know whether the nourishment he derives from you agrees with him. In your heart, Janet, you fear it does not ! To wean him while you keep him with you, you know to be impossible. I offer you constant access to him, excellent nursing, the most experienced care, the company of other children so very desirable in itself. I offer to take you to the first country home I have found for him. And in addition to this, which will be salvation to him, I tell you you will oblige me by accepting Lady Fathom's offer, which you will thus be free to do. And now choose ; shall little Gaspar live or die ? And shall I be obliged by you or not ? But stop."

He took out a little box, and laid it on the table. Janet opened it, having first laid her sleeping boy in his cot. It was a dark morocco ring-box. It contained only a small plain gold ring—a wedding ring.

Janet's color came and went; she trembled, gasped, and fell at the Calculator's feet. Then raising a death-pale face, while from her large black eyes the tears poured like rain, in strange contrast with the almost spasmodic smile on her lips, she said :—

“ Oh, have I then wronged you, Gaspar ? And am I to be your wife at last ? Have I not prayed and wept in vain, my first, my only love !—And may I yet hope that our poor boy, in some distant land seeing I am your wife, may never know I am his guilty mother. Bless you, bless you, my Gaspar ! my true one, my husband ! O the shame I have felt, the scorn I have endured ! Even my sister would not so despise me, were I your wife at last ! ”

And Janet buried her face in Gaspar's knees, and so she did not see the impatient gestures, and the cold sneer of the Calculator. At length he spoke, and his voice seemed to chill poor Janet, for she looked up and slowly rose.

“ Janet ! ” he said, “ I do not say that what

you so wish will never be; but just now, my love, it cannot, alas! it cannot be. I am grieved to have so agitated, and so disappointed you, my sweet one; but have yet patience and faith; they work miracles, my own sweet girl! . . . My present object, darling, in bringing you that ring was, that you may pass at Lady Fathom's as the young widow I have told her you are. But whether that ring may yet be the first link of a dear and eternal chain, my Janet, I will not say how much that may depend on your dear self, your compliance, your devotion, your submission to my wishes, and to that fate which such conduct will above all things strengthen me to cope with, and I hope, to conquer.—On one side, Janet, are our child's life—my wishes—perhaps our *future destiny*! on the other, a blind, selfish indulgence of a maternal weakness. Do you consent?"

"So be it, then!" sobbed Janet, burying her face in her hands—"for his sake, not mine—and God's will be done."

Gaspar then took her cold and listless hand,

placed the ring on her finger, told her a hackney coach should be at the door at eight in the morning, to take her to the sweet country home which was to save her child, and that at a place he named in the suburbs, he would join her. Janet still wept unheeding on ; so he kissed her fair bent head, and left her to her lonely anguish.

## CHAPTER X.

Lady Fathom's child was now quite restored to health. Sir Noah was returned to his home, a good deal disfigured by several burns on his face, but not seriously injured. Vanderhümbügger, with an ample settlement, (legally secured to himself during his life, and to his wife and daughter after his decease,) had departed for Stuttgard, and all was joy and revelry now in Ada's happy home.

She has forgotten, alas! quite forgotten, all the good resolutions made in her hour of anguish. Her child was restored; she saw him more



blooming, more joyous than ever; she forgot that he who gives, can also take away. She did not "return to give thanks," in the way alone acceptable on high; not with the sacrifice of some darling sin, some cherished weakness—not in private thanksgiving and tearful meditations on the unspeakable goodness of him who had raised up her darling as it were from the grave. No, no, Sorrow has not yet fully chastened her spirit; she determines to celebrate her child's recovery by a splendid ball; and Vanity and Mammon claim her once again.

Accepted by her, whom he believed to be Miss Castleton, and that lady ready to elope with him whenever he chose, Captain Fitzopal had easily found money-lenders, who (once aware of the circumstances,) were ready to advance him any sums he needed; and thus, duns quieted, and with plenty of cash in hand, he resolved before he united himself for life to a woman he loathed, to enjoy what remained of the London season, and to see in what degree of favour he was still

held by her he loved and admired beyond all other women.

Alas! the little touch of jealousy which the beautiful Ada had experienced; on seeing him one day, as we described, evidently flirting with Inez, ensured him, when next he called, a most cordial welcome. Ada, till she felt that pang, did not know how much she prized her cousin's exclusive devotion; had she been differently brought up, the discovery would have put her on her guard, and she would never have exposed herself to the fascination of his society. But she was Lady Revel's daughter, and Miss Golightly's pupil; and she was a wife in her teens, beloved and indulged certainly by old Sir Noah, but much neglected, and left to the promptings of a vain head, a passionate nature, and two dangerous men; the one, dangerous from his own power to please her, his evident though respectful tenderness, and the memory of the Past; the other, because he loved her with a selfish but a consuming passion—because he had vowed to possess

her, or to die in the pursuit—because he was a bold, reckless, yet calculating man, without compunction and without remorse, and whose hard heart, (in spite of his intense passion for Ada) would carry him through whatever his scheming head might plan for her ruin. Added to this, he was beginning to feel a degree of resentment, irritation, and even revenge against her, not at all incompatible with such a passion as his, but very dangerous for such a defenceless creature as the young, unloving, and neglected wife of an old man to awaken in the heart of such a person as Gaspar Smiley.

All he had done for her had certainly called forth her gratitude, but had not awakened one particle of tenderness. He had restored her to peace, to happiness, to pride and confidence, and for what? To see her lavish the unconscious preference of her now happy, peaceful heart on another! It was as if she looked upon Gaspar Smiley as some safe old fellow, some friend, who had no power to peril her peace, or to make the

world talk of her ; for she welcomed him, invited him, talked freely with him, and even consulted him, in a way no woman does a man she has any notion she might be even suspected of loving. This was of all lines of conduct the one most enraging to Gaspar Smiley ; but he determined to conceal the venom it excited, and to make it work for him sooner or later.

The whole scheme of placing Janet with Lady Fathom was adopted in order that he might have, watching even her most private actions, a person completely in his power ; not that he supposed Janet would ever in any case wittingly accept the office of a spy, or perform its mean and dastardly duties intentionally ; but she was open, artless, uncommonly unsuspecting, and therefore Gaspar knew he could very easily learn from her all he wanted to know ; and by glossing over his motives, and concealing his designs, induce her to do almost anything he wished. Added to these deeper and darker motives for placing Janet with Lady Fathom, was one rather less guilty, but far

from blameless; he knew that Ada had no one about her darling boy, in whom she felt any real confidence; and that this circumstance—inducing the anxious mother to spend a great deal of time in her nursery, robbed him of many hours of delight in themselves, and of importance for the furthering of his schemes. Janet, so trustworthy, so true, so fond of children, and who had already saved the life of little Noah, would, he felt sure, inspire Lady Fathom with the fullest confidence, and enable her to enjoy at her ease all the pleasures which wooed her, and which were become so insipid to Gaspar unless shared with her.

And so, poor Janet's child was placed in a country home, and Janet was installed as nursery governess to little Noah.

## CHAPTER XI.

The ball Lady Fathom was about to give to celebrate the recovery of her darling boy, engrossed the attention not merely of herself, and her two constant attendants, Captain Fitzopal and Major Smiley, but of the whole *beau monde*. It was to be a fancy ball; and as there is a good deal of the Tom-fool, and the Merry Andrew, in the nature of the wisest, people are always delighted with an opportunity of strutting about in borrowed plumes; and women who have, as Pope says, 'no characters at all,' of assuming one even for a night.

The only drawback now existing to Ada's rapturous enjoyment of all the pleasures of life, was the uncertain fate of her beloved brother. She had opened her young heart on the subject to her tried and trusty friend Major Smiley, and he had perceived, with a bitterness he took care to conceal, that while all youthful pleasures—costumes for the ball, matters of taste and sentiment, &c., &c., were submitted solely to Adolphus Fitzopal, he, as if he were some unloveable and unloving old bore, was consulted only about the harsh realities, the trials, and the sober business of life.

All this was noted against Ada, in the cold, unforgetting heart of the Calculator. Words cannot describe the jealous venom with which Major Smiley saw Ada—now that Janet had the care of her darling—devote to Fitzopal, with a preference, a tenderness, and a gentle deference, of which she herself was quite unconscious, those days of pleasant listlessness and nights of gaiety, which perhaps, but for Major Smiley, would have been spent in mourning and despair.

He began to see that there was no hope at all of his awakening any passion or even any strong affection for himself in Ada's bosom ; but this so far from cooling his own ardour, had exactly the opposite effect. Janet's deep and exclusive devotion had had no power to bind him to her ; on the contrary, her constant tenderness had accelerated his desertion ; and Ada's indifference had no power to estrange him, but excited and piqued him into a more resolute pursuit.

Every Saturday, Janet went to Turnham Green, to see her darling little Gaspar, and she certainly had the satisfaction of finding that fresh air, exercise, new milk, and the company of other children, was making her boy as perfect a picture of beautiful health, as he had before been of delicate loveliness. His soft flaxen hair, which in London had waxed damp and sickly on his pellucid brow, where the cerulean veins were far too legible, now curled crisply up in rings of paly gold. His eyes, so remarkably large and languid, looked now all radiant with health and joy ;



while the plumpness and carnation of his cheeks took from their size all that had been startling. He was taller by the head than any other boy of his age ; and Janet's salary (considerately paid in advance by Lady Fathom) enabled her to provide him with a capital wardrobe, a variety of toys, and many little indulgences, not granted even by the wealthier parents of legitimate children then, with little Gaspar, under the care of Mrs. Kosset. But *they* were the children of wedded wives, who had husbands to love and divide their interests, and other children to share their affection and their anxiety ; while little Gaspar was poor Janet's all—the only thing on earth she lived for, the only thing to whose existence she felt her own was necessary—the only being on whose love she felt she had a claim, and whom she could look upon as the companion, the comforter, and the protector, through the arid future her own crime had spread before her. No marvel that she loved him with all the enthusiasm of her passionate nature ! No wonder that to see him thrive and

bloom almost reconciled her to the misery of being separated from him !

Meanwhile, she was all that was kind and gentle, and endearing to little Noah, who began to love her next to his own mamma, and to be good and happy in the absences of the latter, if Janet was always singing to, or playing with, him. Every Saturday, Major Smiley, pretending to Janet to share her interest in their child, attended her privately in a hackney coach to Turnham Green ; and during the drive he contrived to learn from the artless Janet every detail of Lady Fathom's life, her tastes, wishes, remarks, &c., &c., which were so important to him to know. He was so much, and so miserably in love, that independently of the use to be made of such knowledge in forwarding his plans, every little incident, every word, every look of Ada's had an interest and a charm for him !

Things were going on thus, when the important day of Lady Fathom's ball approached. The Evergreens and Inez Mac Alpine (alias Miss

Castleton) had heard so much of this ball, and had read such flaming accounts of the preparations in the Morning Post, and the Court Journal, that they resolved to use their interest with Captain Fitzopal to get invitations.—The Captain wished much to evade such a request, but he saw his *fiancée*, the Evergreen, (and as he believed, the heiress,) draw up her tall form, and her dark eyes flash fire, and he felt he must submit. So cards were exchanged between Lady Fathom and Miss Evergreen, and the whole party, including Devereux Spight, Mc. Peevish, and Fitzplagiari, were invited to the ball.

The generous Inez was at the expense of the fancy dresses of the two Evergreens. Miss Evergreen chose to be gorgeous as a sultana; and the kind Inez, besides getting her from Paris a splendid and most suitable costume, lent her all her jewels, diamonds, and pearls, which would have awakened the envy of many a peeress. For herself, she chose the character of a gipsy; and her arch black eyes, her raven hair, and dazzling

teeth, made her one of the loveliest Zingari that ever wheedled away a half-crown or a heart.

Miss Thalia Evergreen, who was very proud of her spotless reputation, her somewhat large and redundant figure, and the abundant red hair which she had always called auburn, chose to be Diana; her dress was blue and silver, looped up at the knee; a diamond crescent on her brow, a beautiful bow in her hand, and a quiver full of arrows at her back; while her stout but handsome legs were arrayed in buskins. At a little distance, and with the aid of a Parisian corset, Thalia looked rather imposing.

Mc.Peevish and Fitzplagiari, who professed the warmest and most indissoluble friendship, and who certainly, as authors, were bound together by the tie of mutual disappointment, mortification, and neglect, chose to be Castor and Pollux, which they contrived by being arrayed in short starry tunics exactly alike, each having round his head a silver band, and on his forehead a gold star;

and by appearing constantly closely linked together, the bare arm of the one round the equally bare throat of the other.

As for Mr. Devereux Spight, he kept his intended character a profound secret, and no one, not even the Evergreens or Inez, could by any pumping, prying, or peeping, get the slightest information on this important mystery.

Captain Fitzopal had contrived to satisfy Ada's curiosity about the lovely brunette of Gower Street, without revealing the secret of Miss Castleton, and his intended marriage. He felt sure (whatever Major Smiley might assert) that his apparent indifference to the great fortune almost within his grasp, and his supposed relinquishment of all his claims to Ada's brother Wildair Revel, had wrought deeply and powerfully in his favour on the heart of Ada. And sometimes, when he tore himself from the contemplation of her soft youthful face, to gaze on the harsh marked features of his *fiancée*, he was inclined to

run all risks, confess to Ada the love he bore her, throw himself on her mercy, and resign for ever the (to him) odious Evergreen.

Meanwhile, although from a habit of flirting with, and ogling every pretty woman, Captain Fitzopal had gazed impertinently and talked nonsensically to the real heiress, under the name of Inez, that arch and shrewd girl had become perfectly disenchanted with the captivating Adolphus. She had penetration enough to see that though he made *doux yeux* at her, and evidently admired her person, his heart, such as it was, was engrossed by another, and yet that he was willing to sell himself to an affected old maid like Miss Evergreen, under the belief that two hundred thousand pounds would be the price of his hand.

The little counterplot of Devereux Spight and the Evergreens had not been confided to Inez; but she quickly suspected the whole, exquisitely enjoyed the trick, and appeared perfectly unsuspecting on the subject. With an air of Eastern

indolence and *insouciance*, which was very deceptive, few things escaped the arch and keen-witted girl. The Evergreens, who considered themselves fit to captivate any man, did not think the admiration of the Captain required an explanation. It was enough, as they agreed, for Cleasentina, or rather Inez, to ascertain that, unaided by her wealth, she had no power to win Captain Fitzopai.

"And in confidence, dear Thalia, sister of my soul!" said Miss Evergreen, throwing herself into her sister's arms, "I do believe that he admires me so much, both my mind and my person, that even without this *ruse* of Spight's I should have been the fortunate winner of his noble heart."

"Well," replied Thalia (who had more knowledge of the world than her more high-flown sister,) "that is not at all impossible; but at the same time, as we know Adolphus is in debt, and therefore would not perhaps propose to an angel whom he knew to be penniless, I implore you, Mel-

pomene, as you value the title of his Intended, not in any moment of romantic rashness to reveal to him the real state of the case, until you are in all respects his *bona fide* wife ; then will the *dénouement* indeed enable you to judge of the depth and disinterestedness of his passion. If, my own Melly, the result reveals a sordid soul, caught only by your supposed immense fortune, I should glory in his punishment ; if, on the contrary, he loves you for yourself alone, what pride, what joy, to be made certain of that fact ! In any case, his debts, and your own, will compel you to live abroad ; the sale of his commission will secure some funds, and of course he has friends who cannot let himself and his bride starve. So cheer up, my own Melpomene—keep your own counsel, till you are indeed Mrs. Fitzopal, and then, be it as it may, you must be the gainer.”



## CHAPTER XII.

The lovely Inez, somewhat weary of the protracted courtship going on between Captain Fitzopal and Miss Evergreen, began to feel some natural anxiety about her other suitors. . From old Grumbleby's addresses, the lively girl expected nothing but sport; but she had begun to think it possible that Wildair Revel might not deserve all the misfortunes he had met with. It was part of her generous nature to take a deep and lively interest in any one in trouble, and the blame and evil report of the world, cold

and unjust as she believed that world to be, generally raised up a champion for the condemned, in Inez's warm heart. Added to this, she had met at a literary soirée, whither she had accompanied the Evergreens, a young Oxonian, who happened to be of the same college as Wildair Revel. He was one of his intimate friends, and during a quadrille they danced together (Inez and young Bolton), he, not having of course the most remote idea of whom he was addressing, had been very communicative about Wildair and his history. To Inez's question as to whether he had any Oxford friends in London, he had replied that he was actually then staying in London in the hopes of meeting with a friend, who, though under a cloud, was the very best fellow in the world. "It's Wildair Revel" he added, with the ready communicativeness of a very young man.

Inez suppressed a start of surprise.

"Poor fellow! He's the only son of Sir Wildair Revel, Baronet, of Revel Court," he

added, with the silly pride young men take in such details.

"And are you intimate with him?" asked Inez, archly, as if she rather suspected not.

"Oh very; we're in the same lectures; our rooms are in the same quod; we pull in the same boat; we used to be all day in and out each other's rooms;—we'd everything in common!"

"One mind, one heart, one purse, one coat, one hat!" smiled Inez.

"Very nearly so," said Bolton. "You know, or at least you must know, poor Revel is rusticated, and 'pon my word, it's not for any fault of his; but he's the very kindest and most generous creature alive. St. Leger, a wild sporting fellow, who professed to be very much attached to Revel, has '*let him in*' for all this. In the first place, he was always '*walking in*' to Revel's horses—borrowing his '*tin*,' and getting him into scrapes. However, St. Leger seemed to be a frank, open-hearted '*bird*'—no one's enemy but his own; but the fact is, he was a

'*cunning file.*' Now Revel's a capital scholar, and St. Leger's *no end of bird for grabbing anything he can!* Revel wrote a poem for the prize; and, by Jove, it was the '*spiciest*' thing you ever heard. Well, he lent it to St. Leger. In the mean time, St. Leger gets Revel to accept a bill for him; Revel having expectations, and St. Leger's father being as poor as a rat, though St. Leger lives like a man of two thousand a year at Oxford—(all on '*tick*,' Miss Mc. Alpine). Where Revel, a Baronet's only son, hunted once, St. Leger, a mere nobody, whose father I hear is a Surgeon called Sillinger, hunts six times at least. Well, St. Leger *trumps* up a long *yarn* that makes Revel accept this bill. Just about this time, (I'm speaking in strict confidence, mind, Miss Mc. Alpine), St. Leger, for a '*lark*,' dresses up a beautiful girl, like an Oxford man, cap and gown, et cetera, and smuggles her into a supper party. The Dons got wind of this, and the girl, of course instructed by St. Leger, though acting as if of her own accord, rushes into Revel's room, the

door of which happens to be open, and hides behind the curtain. The Dons search St. Leger's rooms, and find nothing; but the '*sly coves*' are still on the watch, and two hours later they detect my Lady stealing out of Revel's rooms. Well, Revel won't betray St. Leger, who isn't man enough to stand forth and tell the truth. A Common room is held; Revel's affair in accepting a bill, and in secreting this girl, is brought forward—St. Leger, forsooth, being ill in bed! Revel's rusticated, and but that he stood very high, and was a most popular man with the dons, as well as the men, would have been expelled. St. Leger goes whining to him, offering to give himself up, though it will be his ruin, &c. &c. Revel won't hear of it. His Father won't receive him; he goes no one knows where; and last term, St. Leger gets the prize poem! . . . . . But I'll *eat my hat*, Miss Mc. Alpine, if that poem wasn't almost all, if not quite all, *cribbed* from poor Revel's. And now, where Revel is, or what he's doing, I've no idea; and if St.

Leger has got the prize with Revel's poem, Revel's such a *brick* and such a *bean*, he'll never betray him; but be very glad to have given the scoundrel such a *lift*!"

"Poor Mr. Revel!" said Inez, "how I should like to know him; what a kind, generous, manly creature he must be!"

"Ah, you may well say that! and what you ladies think a good deal of besides, he's one of the handsomest fellows in Oxford. Why he's taller than I am!" And young Bolton drew up a figure six feet high. "And as for riding, leaping, fencing, boxing, and driving, he's a regular *dab* at all of them, besides being sure of his first if he's ever able to go up."

"And wouldn't his Father or his Mother do anything for him?" asked Inez, with tears in her eyes.

"Not they! but thereby hangs a tale. There's a good fat living in the family, and Sir Wildair, who's run through the best part of his property, insists on Revel's going into the Church; and

this Revel vows he won't do, unless he feels very differently about it to what he does now. So Sir Wildair orders him out of his presence—and away goes my poor friend without a pound in the world !”

“Why, he may die of want !” said Inez, clasping her hands.

“I’ve done all I could !” said Bolton ; “I’ve made every inquiry, but all in vain. I’d share my last shilling with him ; and I’m in town now in the hopes of finding him, though I’m losing a chance of five hundred a year from an old aunt in the North, by not staying along with her.”

“Do you think he is engaged to any one ?” asked Inez, anxiously.

“Oh, not he ! he’s so confoundedly high-flown and romantic about women, always talking of his achetypal idea of the sex. He expects such perfection, and such devotion, and till he finds it, he means to keep his heart unscathed !”

“He is right !” said Inez.

“It may be found, certainly !” said Bolton,

venturing to press Inez's hand in the dance, and colouring to the very roots of his flaxen hair. "But till this evening, I did not know that perfection existed in the female sex."

Inez withdrew her hand, and looked proud and offended.

"And," added Mr. Bolton, with the ready resentment of a very young man—"one is easily misled by appearances, and most pretty women are so full of pride and conceit!"

Inez laughed, and Mr. Bolton grew redder and redder.

"If I could but meet with poor Wildair," said Bolton, "I'd soon let him into a *wrinkle* or two. I've seen a great deal of the world (he was just twenty) and I know the sex well; and if he'd listen to me, he'd give up all his chimeras and utopian ideas. The Cœlebs of the present day fall in with no Lucillas; all the women are in love, but it's only with themselves."

"You are very severe, Mr. Bolton," said Inez,



meekly; "you know we must be sought, and not unwooed be won."

"Well!" said the Oxonian, a little softened by her gentle manner, and the appeal of her beautiful eyes, "there's something in that. I know I do say very cutting things; I've an unhappy knack of that; and I do so hate both prudes and coquettes, that I generally give them a *wipe*, and make them look *no end of small*. However, if I could but see Wildair Revel, I'd do my best to make him take the goods the gods provide him. Here's his Father mad to find out where he is now!—now that perhaps he's let him die in a jail—for here's an Indian heiress either coming or come over, to see which of three suitors her Father, by will, has limited her choice to, she prefers. Revel is one of the three, and I think he'd have a good chance, if the girl's got a pair of eyes in her head. But her money—though I hear she's got a million clear—won't make Wildair marry her, unless he likes her; and as I hear she's a purse-proud, ugly, little blackey, as

yellow as a guinea, as crooked as a ram's-horn, and somewhere about thirty, I don't think she'd have a chance of Revel."

"And where did you hear such an account of her?" asked Ines, rather piqued.

"Oh, it's all over Oxford, that she's just what I tell you. Most heiresses are. It isn't likely that Fortune should bestow on the same individual, the immense wealth of Miss Castleton, and the matchless grace, intelligence, and beauty of the lovely Miss Mc. Alpine; but they are going down to supper. May I have the honour of offering my arm?"

## CHAPTER XIII.

Mr. Bolton's graphic account of Wildair Revel made a deep impression on the generous and romantic heart of the Indian heiress. Such a character as had been described to her, was, with all its faults, the one, of all others, to excite her interest. The daring, the generosity, ascribed to Wildair, captivated her fancy; the chivalrous self-sacrifice which had prevented his betraying the mean-spirited St. Leger, the high principle which made him refuse an excellent living because he felt no vocation for the Church, the genius which had enabled him to write the poem which the

enthusiastic girl felt sure St. Leger had stolen, and the noble contempt of praise and success, which could make him glad St. Leger should have profitted by his talent—all this, added to Bolton's account of his fine person and his many manly accomplishments, filled Inez's heart with a vague and romantic predilection, and excited in her impatient spirit an evident desire to meet this 'Disinherited Knight.' Nothing short of a lively and actual preference for some engaging reality, could have withdrawn Inez's fancy from its worship of an imaginary, or at least an unknown, idol. This preference the romantic Inez was destined ere long to feel.

An article of unusual malignity, in the *Hornet*, affecting the characters of several powerful individuals, had compelled Devereux Spight to spend a few days out of Town. It was during his absence that a little adventure threw in the way of the charming Inez, one who was to drive from her fancy all anxiety connected with poor Wildair Revel.

We have mentioned that in a back attic of 'Evergreen House,' a poor author hid himself from the world, and contrived, by the most industrious exercise of his pen, to keep himself alive. Without introduction, without connexion, and without means to get himself puffed into notice, poor Luckless (such was his ominous name) was obliged to accept any employment, however ill-paid or laborious, in the fields of Parnassus. Translations, revisions, indexes—at all of these wearisome and subordinate works, did he toil night and day; and even the mere manual exertion of copying out into a fair and legible hand, some crabbed MSS., his poverty compelled him to undertake. It was whispered too, by the sportive Thalia, that he had been compelled to degrade his muse into the service of certain fashionable tailors and perfumers and blacking-makers, who were ambitious of 'shining in song;' and yet this poor literary drudge was a scholar, a man of taste, genius, and industry. He had written many things which, could he have

found a publisher, would have made his name, and filled his purse. But some mystery, perhaps disgraceful to him, seemed to surround him. He appeared to be afraid to show himself abroad by daylight, and only occasionally hurried out to a neighbouring bookseller's, with the miserable ill-paid work with which he was provided there.

Before the arrival of the heiress, this poor fellow had engrossed a good deal of the Evergreens' attention and thoughts; and indeed, at that time, the five shillings a-week which he regularly paid for his miserable back attic, were very important to them.

They had even discovered his talents, and induced Devereux Spight to insert in the *Hornet*, a very clever satire he had written on the reigning vices and follies of the day; but the satire had elicited so much applause, and had been so much quoted and noticed, that it provoked Spight's envy, and the next article poor Luckless offered he determined scornfully to reject.

Spight, too, conceived a strong personal dislike

to the poor young author, whose genius he not only suspected to be far greater than his own, but whom he envied and hated for being a very fine, tall, handsome young fellow ; with an air of independence and *nonchalance*, which was quite natural to him ; but which Spight, a very small man, and conscious of a bar sinister in his escutcheon, and a very questionable fame as Editor of the Hornet, looked upon as a personal offence to himself. This feeling of envy and dislike grew into positive hate, when before the rejection of his second article was announced to him, Spight sent him through Miss Evergreen a five-pound note for his first contribution.

Miss Evergreen, of her own accord, sent it up to Luckless's attic, enclosed, with the number of the Hornet in which the satire appeared. She had given Luckless no idea as to what paper or magazine it was to be sent to ; and she was very much surprised when she received by her maid, the Hornet, and the five-pound note enclosed, with a billet thus couched :—

"Mr. Luckless is much obliged to Miss Evergreen for her kindness in wishing to serve him, but he is certain she cannot be aware of the character and aim of the paper to which she sent his satire, or she would never suffer it to enter her house. Mr. Luckless, although reduced by inevitable misfortunes to write for his bread, is a gentleman by birth and education, and therefore he cannot degrade himself so far as to accept of any remuneration from so vile a source as the *Hornet*, and while he deeply regrets Miss Evergreen's inserting his article in such a low, slanderous, and disgraceful publication, he begs most thankfully, but most peremptorily, to withdraw his last contribution."

This note, Miss Evergreen, who had not much tact, was foolish enough to read to Mc. Peevish and Fitzplagiary, who were delighted to report its contents to the dreaded, hated, and envied Devereux Spight. The passive dislike and envy that person had felt before, now grew into active



hatred and malignity. He insisted on the Evergreens giving him notice to quit, and he was very glad that the romantic heiress should not be exposed to the chance of meeting one, whose evident poverty would, he felt sure, only interest her the more in his person and genius.

However, back attics are easily to be had in London ; and two or three streets off, Luckless found another retreat equally suited to his purse and his views.

It was during Spight's temporary absence that Inez one day imprudently ventured out alone. It was an exercise of independence of which she was too fond, though generally with the excellent object of doing good by stealth. On this occasion, however, she returned pale, alarmed, and in evident disorder, supported by a young man of commanding and distinguished air, but miserably attired ; a brown, almost napless hat, a coat buttoned so as to conceal, if possible, the absence of a waistcoat ; a mackintosh, though the weather was lovely ; and no gloves on his white and

aristocratic looking hands ; the only thing about him that redeemed his toilet, was a fine and perfectly clean shirt, such as none but gentlemen wear ; and a scrupulous cleanliness and nicety in his whole appearance, from his closely curling dark brown hair, down to the boots full of cracks and holes, which could not conceal that he had a very finely shaped foot.

The Misses Evergreens taking at first no notice of her attendant squire, rushed towards the heiress, whom he had placed, half fainting, on a sofa.

"What is it, dearest love ?" asked Miss Evergreen.

"What has happened, sweetest ?" exclaimed Miss Thalia.

"This gentleman will explain all," faltered Inez, pale and trembling. "To his brave conduct I probably owe my life !"

"Mr. Luckless !" exclaimed Miss Evergreen, rather scornfully glancing from his old and most unnecessary mackintosh, to the miserable hat he

had placed on one of the amber satin chairs, to the new gloss of which it certainly formed a wretched contrast. "Pray, Mr. Luckless, how did this happen?" asked Miss Thalia, rather authoritatively.

At this moment, Miss Castleton, who had been growing ominously paler and paler, leant back, closed her eyes, and fainted.

The day was intensely hot; she had been much fatigued and alarmed; and ten years in India had not diminished the natural delicacy of her constitution. At the sight of this swoon, which the inexperienced swain almost mistook for death, he rushed towards her, threw his arm around her to prevent her from falling, and quite regardless of the Evergreens or their question, pushed those officious ladies somewhat too rudely aside, while he exclaimed in a sort of soliloquy:—

"Those heavenly eyes are closed! that cheek is wan as death! What shall I do? Oh, thank heaven! she moves—she moans—sweet soul!" The Evergreens at this moment bent their large

faces eagerly over her. "Stand off, old women!" said the passionate Luckless, almost beside himself, as he saw the returning color recede on Inez's cheek—"Stand off, I say! you stifle her! quick, bring fans, salts, burnt feathers! Pshaw, women, at your time of life not to know how to act in such a case!"

He seized his own worn and battered hat, and fanned Inez vehemently.

"Old women, indeed!" murmured Miss Evergreen.

"I'm no more an old woman than you are, fellow!" screamed Thalia.

"I am better now, Sir!" faltered Inez, opening her eyes, evidently revived by Luckless's rude fanning. "Thank you! oh thank you! and may God reward you!"

The Misses Evergreen sneered, and cast up their hands and eyes; but took good care Inez should not see them do so.

"Nay," said Luckless, "the returning rose on that cheek is ample recompence. Attend to the

young lady!" he said haughtily to the Evergreens; and then added in gentlest accents to Inez: "Madam, farewell, and if the very trifling service I have been so fortunate as to render you entitles me to ask a favor of you—it is simply this, that you will not again expose that beauty unprotected, which you see made two men mad, and"—he added, as if aside, "one—perhaps—miserable."

"Sir!" said Inez, "I will be more cautious; not that *I* so rate, or rather so overrate my pretensions; but your kindness makes your request a law."

The young man rose, bowed to Inez, and said, "Farewell, then, lady!"

"Nay," said Inez earnestly, laying her delicate hand on his threadbare sleeve; "not yet—at least let me know my preserver's name."

Vainly the Evergreens shook their heads, and hemmed aloud.

"My name, Lady, as these persons know, is Luckless; and it is one I am well entitled to."

"I grieve to hear it," said Inez (the water sparkling in her large black eyes); "he who could risk his life for an unknown and defenceless woman deserves better of Fate. Will you honor us by your company here this evening?"

Miss Evergreen exclaimed in dismay: "You forget, you are engaged, love!"

"Do think of us!" whispered Thalia; "single, literary, the public eye upon us."

"He was our 'back attic!'" hissed Miss Evergreen; adding as a blind—"you cannot disappoint them, dearest!"

"I shall certainly spend this evening at home!" said Inez, haughtily, her eyes flashing fire, and the Indian Queen in every gesture. The Evergreens cowered before her. "Let me add, Sir, that I should be better pleased still if you would favour us with your company to dinner!"

"If circumstances permit, I will give myself that happiness," said Luckless, adding to himself, ("if I can any way get out my coat and waistcoat

I will.") "Lady, may I in my turn crave your name?"

"Inez Mc. Alpine; and these ladies, whom you seem to know something of, my aunts. We are a literary coterie, and I strongly suspect you are a brother of the order."

"Other pursuits having failed, I have been trying that last resource of the wretched—the pen. But how did you detect this, Miss Mc. Alpine?"

"Oh, there are signs and symptoms—a pale check, a bright eye——"

"And," added Luckless, "a shabby coat."

"And what of that?" said Inez, proudly; "a good picture can dispense with a fine frame; and the binding is to me the least important part of a book. But let me beg you, Sir, to bring some of your smaller pieces with you to-day. We have an extensive acquaintance among authors—they might help you."

"I thought so once, but I have found that one author is not more likely to assist another, than

one beauty to help another to a lover, or one lion to provide another with a lamb. However, I shall be only too proud to submit some of my fugitive pieces to you, and will now say the (to me) cheering *au revoir*, instead of the mournful *adieu*."

Inez timidly extended her hand, which Luckless took as if it had been a saint's. He then bowed stiffly to the Evergreens, and withdrew.

When the street door had closed after him, Inez rushed to the bell and pulled it violently, again and again. In darted Rose Pink in alarm.

"Rose! here, come to the window—so you have your bonnet on, well! Do you see that gentleman?"

"I see, Mem, a tall man, walking slowly, dressed very unbecoming, and shabby genteel, with a orrid 'at hon 'is ead."

"That's he, Rose!" said Inez, in a whisper. "Now slip down, follow him unobserved at a distance, till you see where he lives—manage



this well, and you shall go to the play, girl, and have a new dress."

"Oh, thank 'ee, Mem, I'll do my best. But, Lor!" she added, aside, as she tripped down-stairs, "'ow hold and hobsolete he do look, at least 'is 'at; but what's the odds, so she's 'appy. She's money enough to marry to her mind, even if she don't take one of the three prescribed fellers. And Stubbs shall take me to the play; so I warrant I'll find out where he lives, as sure as my name's Rose Pink—and as I don't mean it to be Pink much longer."

Inez stood watching Luckless's retreating figure till he was out of sight, and then she turned round, and perceiving discontent and something like resentment on the large faces of the Evergreens, she drew her slight figure proudly up, and looked at them with an expression before which their eyes quailed. Their features relaxed as Inez thrêw herself into a chair, and took up her knitting; and meekly approaching her, Miss Evergreen said: "Will my charm-

ing love think it officious, if I say that the darling was a little imprudent in inviting a stranger like that——”

“Almost a pauper! Beauty!” said Thalia, “to the abode of maiden purity—an insolent pauper too.”

“With no introduction, sweetest!” said Miss Evergreen.

“There you are mistaken,” said Inez, calmly, “he had an excellent introduction to me, else I should not have invited him.”

“Oh, he *was* introduced!” said Miss Evergreen. “I beg your pardon, love! may I ask by whom, darling?”

“Of course that’s quite a different thing,” echoed Thalia. “Do tell us, sweet one, who introduced him to your notice?”

“Who? why a brave and generous action—to my mind, a nobler introduction than Lord or Lady could bestow!”

“Oh, dear, is that all!”

“Bless me, that amounts to nothing!”

"Well, you are a dear, beautiful oddity, and you must have your own way, I suppose; he's not a swindler of course, for we know he writes for his bread; and no one would take to the pen who could make up his mind to pick a pocket. But I don't know what Devereux Spight will say—he hates him!"

"I cannot think what we shall do about it with Spight," said Thalia, "he'll be so angry \_\_\_\_"

"Once for all, Misses Evergreen," said Clementina Castleton, her colour rising and her eyes flashing, "let it be understood, that I recognize no right in Mr. Spight, or in any one, to interfere in the least with my actions. The moment I find any disagreeable interference is the result of my fixing on this abode, I quit it for ever. I am entire mistress of my actions, and though I respond to affection, and often ask advice, I repel all presumption, and resent all liberties."

The two Evergreens burst into tears.

"We would not have offended you for the world, love!"

"We meant nothing, indeed, dearest; only you are so young, and so lovely, and so very unsuspecting."

"Enough of this," said Inez, her kind heart relenting directly she saw the Evergreens' tears. "Now be quiet, and I'll tell you all about my adventure."

"Oh do, there's a love!"

"Thank you, darling!"

"I had just hurried with a few trifles into Paradise Alley, (a few streets off), and missing my way, I wandered on till I got into Tottenham Court Road. I had been much annoyed by a gaunt, tall, old bear in spectacles, dodging me about—passing and repassing me, and peeping under my bonnet, muttering something about 'his dear,' and his 'love,' and otherwise annoying me. To avoid him, I resolved, much fluttered, to cross the street. A cab dashed up, and in it I recognized Captain Fitzopal, and with him a

bold-looking military man, to whom the Captain was pointing me out, and both were staring, nodding, and smiling so rudely, that, quite bewildered, I darted on; when another carriage meeting the cab, just where I crossed, I was knocked down, and fell between the horses! I must have been killed on the spot had not this gentleman, Mr. Luckless, darted forward, at the risk of his life seized the rein of the cab horse with one hand, while with the other he gave one of the carriage horses a blow on the face which made him back; both parties then drew in their horses, and my preserver carried me fainting away. He bore me into a pastry-cook's, where I recovered. I saw my odious old follower peering in at the window; but Captain Fitzopal never took the trouble to inquire himself after me, though he did condescend to send his tiger to ask if I was hurt. Hearing I was not, he drove laughingly off with his odious companion. I asked my preserver to call a coach, and to be so good as to see me home. And now you know

my whole story, and have to thank Mr. Luckless that I am here to tell it, instead of being brought home on a shutter—a smashed and hideous spectacle; so, if you value me, make much of him. And now I am going to lie down till dinner time, for I am very much upset, and mean, if possible, to look my best, notwithstanding.”

Having reached her own room, the pretty heiress rang for Rose Pink, who had cleverly ascertained the abode of Luckless—(only two streets off—how fortunate!). Inez sent her away for a light, and hastily enclosing a fifty-pound note, (had she had a hundred-pound one in her desk, she would have preferred it), she wrote in a bold, manly hand:—

“An old fellow, who admires bravery in youth, having witnessed the gallant conduct of Mr. Luckless in saving a woman from a frightful accident in the street, and who imagines, from Mr. L.’s attire, that his heart is nobler than his fortunes, encloses him this small compliment,

and hopes to be able to serve him more effectually some day.

SENEX."

Having instructed Rose to get some decent man to deliver this letter, Inez threw herself on her bed, and dreamed of her preserver.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Poor Luckless was in a sad dilemma after he left the fascinating Inez. He was completely captivated by her grace, her beauty, her tenderness, and above all, the independent spirit she had shown in inviting him, so evidently against the wishes of the two Evergreens—women he disliked, for their affectation and mock dignity, and despised for the heartless manner in which they had insisted on driving him out of the poor back attic for which he had paid so regularly, and to the miserable discrepancies of which he was in some measure accustomed. He had taken refuge



there when Fortune first frowned upon him so bitterly, and there he had wished quietly to await any change in the mood of the fickle Goddess. As poor Luckless knew nothing of the enmity and evil power of Spight, he thought the Evergreens acted very harshly in driving him to seek another retreat, particularly after they had often, by bows, nods, kind words *en passant*, and two or three times by pressing invitations, intimated that they were perfectly well satisfied with him as a lodger. If he, through ignorance of their dread of Spight, rather exaggerated their unkindness, he also, from having no idea of Inez's actual position in their family, greatly overrated her spirit and her independence. For a protégée niece, so youthful as she appeared to him, such conduct would indeed have been remarkable, and have shown at once a most resolute disposition in herself, and a most marked predilection in his favour.

As he sat at his miserable little table pondering on this, and recalling with that vague emotion,

which the romantic call 'Love at first sight,' the beautiful eyes, and sylph-like form of Inez, poor Luckless felt an ardent desire to avail himself of her pressing invitation to dinner. "But alas!" he said to himself, "I have nothing left in which a gentleman could appear before a lady. My old frock coat! (even if I could pin back the tails) is quite disgraceful. Waistcoat, alas! I have none! No, I fear I must give it up; and what will she think? and how those odious Evergreens will triumph! Oh, ye Uncles of England, as 'Punch' so wittily calls you, why are your hearts so hard! that of the whole elegant wardrobe of mine which you possess, no prayers or tears would induce you to grant me a few garments for one evening's wear. I must give it up, and write a note of excuse."

As poor Luckless sate vainly trying to please himself in a note to Miss Mc. Alpine, Deborah, a char-woman, who in his present abode supplied the place of a servant, called from the stairs, "Mr. Luckless, Sir!" Mr. Luckless opened his

door, and perceived through the steam of a pail of soap-suds, Deborah's black silk bonnet, tilted on a bottle nose, and a lean arm, with a hand puckered with soap-suds, extending a letter to him.

"Who brought this, Deborah?" asked Luckless, seizing it.

"A man that only gived it in; and as he axed no questions, I told him no lies. Oh, my blessed bones, how them do yake! Up and down for ever—I'm a'most done for, and it's you as'll have the honour of a finishing me off—up and down for everlasting a waiting on you!"

Luckless, who, standing on the upper landing, had perused the letter which Inez had sent him, and whose heart had leapt for joy at the sight of the welcome and most unexpected enclosure, laughed as he heard the old crone, who never gave herself any trouble about him, complain of his 'finishing her off.' However, in the sudden joy of his heart, he felt kindly even to her, and taking tenpence halfpenny (till that moment his

all) off his mantel-piece, he gave them to her, saying: "There, Deborah, there's a trifle for snuff; and now get me a jug of hot water and two clean towels, there's a good old soul!"

Deborah, who had never before seen, as' she said, 'the colour of the 'back attic's' money,' could scarcely credit her own good fortune, and she darted off as nimbly to do his bidding as if he had been the 'front parlour' or even the 'first floor.'

Meanwhile, poor Luckless, (who had not a doubt that this welcome note came as it professed to do from some old oddity, who had seen him save Inez Mc. Alpine) rushed into the street—threw himself into a cab—paid his respects to his 'uncle,' to a glover, hatter, boot-maker, and perfumer—returned to his attic, where he found Deborah had swept the floor, made the bed, removed the dust of weeks, changed his wretched little yellow basin for a large blue one, and a wretched lop-sided little glass of Dutch plate, which made one giddy and hideous, for a large

and flattering toilet glass, covered his horse with towels, lavished on him a huge piece of yellow soap, and provided him with a luxury he had not enjoyed since he had been a 'back attic'—a large jug of boiling water—half a pint of a tepid and greasy fluid, with 'blacks' floating on the top, having been all that the inexorable Deborah had ever before yielded to his requests or remonstrances.

At a quarter to six, that same back attic—which had so often seen Luckless steal at dusk, tattered, torn, and enveloped in a mackintosh, having dined on a crust of bread and a glass of London water—now beheld him dressed in a style of quiet elegance no nobleman need surpass. Hope, love, and joy on his open intelligent brow, his closely curling hair of golden brown, glossy, and fragrant, his bright blue eyes smiling in unison with a handsome mouth, set off by the most beautiful teeth; his step firm, his bearing aristocratic, his air noble, and his heart, improvident and sanguine Luckless! light as a bird's!

Deborah very nearly upset her pail in her sudden curtsy as he passed, and the young ladies of the house who lived in the kitchen, ran up the area steps to stare at the "back attic," who was gone out "such a swell," they were certain sure he'd won a prize in the lottery, or married an heiress, or come into a sight of money somehow !” And so they ran up-stairs to rummage his room.

Luckily, the "back attic" had taken his money, the letter, and the keys of his desk with him ; so they found nothing but his old mackintosh and his newly-recovered garments strewn about the bed and the chairs. His dressing case, which he had also redeemed, occupied them for some time with its endless variety of beautiful bottles with silver tops, on which was a crest ; the scents, the soaps, the scissors, tweezers, and delicate knick-knacks ; all these, as belonging to the despised "back attic," called forth endless "Oh mys !" "Dearee mes !" "Well to be sures," and "Only thinks ;" and then rapidly concluding that the possessor of such a dressing-case must be a

prince in disguise, and that perhaps by being very rude and inattentive to him, as they had hitherto been, each had lost a chance of becoming a princess, they set to adorning his room, putting things in beautiful order, stowing away his clothes in a chest of drawers they brought up from the second floor, placing geraniums in his window, a white cloth and bouquet on his toilette, evergreens in his fire-place, a carpet on his floor, and above all, the cleanest and finest of linen in his bed. Well did they verify the maxim, "*Aide-toi, et je t'aiderai.*" These are the same Misses who had taken away, by degrees, to accommodate themselves or other lodgers, half the poor furniture the room possessed when Luckless hired it ! Having exhausted their fancy in embellishing the room, the Misses Slink repaired to their own toilets in the scullery to adorn themselves, determined to meet the "back attic" on the stairs when he went up into his room.

## CHAPTER XV.

It was a delightful evening poor Luckless spent at "Evergreen House." A gentleman by birth, education, and habits, this was the first time for some months that he had been treated as such; and things which formerly would only have been to him every-day comforts, were now, from long disuse, exhilarating luxuries. Inez, dressed to the greatest possible advantage, and dawning love shedding its soft lustre over her whole person, received Mr. Luckless with graceful and almost affectionate courtesy. And the Evergreens, who saw there was no help for it, and that Inez must



be obeyed, even at the risk of offending Spight, rivalled each other in the kindness of their welcome to the heiress's new favourite.

The dinner (the first good dinner Mr. Luckless had partaken of for many a long month) was elegant and *récherché*, and served in a style which astonished Luckless, so little could he reconcile it to his preconceived notions of the mode of life of the Evergreens. It is true that Inez knew little or nothing of housekeeping; India is no place to study so useful an art; but Inez had a capital head, an excellent understanding, and a perfect taste. She soon discovered that the best of everything was attainable in London, and that by paying the best prices at the best shops. This she was delighted to do; for spending, giving, and making herself and others happy and comfortable, this was her idea of the use of money. Putting it out to interest, speculating, saving, hoarding—of all this she had no idea. The fault of her character was its improvidence, and a somewhat too lazy and self-indulgent profusion. She

gave lavishly to any impostors who even pretended to be in want, when it would have been more praiseworthy, though certainly far more troublesome, to have bestowed such generous assistance on those less clamorous in imploring it, and who rather strove to conceal than to proclaim their sufferings.

But if Inez's charity was not judicious, it was warm and extensive. The woman with the hired twins at her breast was every day at her door. Gower Street was quite infested by sham cripples, pretended blind men, shipwrecked sailors, Italian boys with organs and white mice, Swiss 'buy a brooms,' dancing dogs, and flower girls.

The neighbours complained, appealed, called on the police, and wondered how the Evergreens could afford to encourage all the vagabonds in London; and they ventured to expostulate with Inez. But, besides being very lavish, Inez was very wilful and resolute, and one imploring smile from the Murillo-like Italian boy, or one monotonous moan of, "Pity a poor blind man!" had

more effect on Inez than all the eloquence of the Evergreens and the wrath of the neighbours.

So the Miss Evergreens consoled themselves with the idea that she had a right to do what she pleased with her own ; and that if it all ended in her marrying Spight, with only her five hundred a year, he would soon teach her economy and obedience. Indeed they rather looked forward to this denouement, as a means of avenging them for all the anxiety and alarm the pretty heiress caused them, and which even her bounty and her general amiability hardly atoned for—so much did they dread the venom of Spight, when he learnt, as they feared he must, that Mr. Luckless had dined at Evergreen House, and perhaps even found him in habits of daily intimacy with Inez. The dinner passed off gaily, the champagne sparkled, and so did Inez's eyes and her playful wit. The Evergreens determined to banish their fears and enjoy the present hour. Emboldened and softened too by the champagne, which she took freely, Miss Evergreen after dinner, finding

Ines had engaged a private box at the Haymarket, dispatched a note to beg Captain Fitzopal—"her own Adolphus," to escort them. But her messenger brought back word that Captain Fitzopal was dining at Sir Noah Fathom's, and was not expected home till very late. So with a sigh, Miss Evergreen gave up the sweet hope of an evening with Adolphus, and *Romeo and Juliet*. And she felt a good deal of jealous resentment against Lady Fathom, for depriving her, by what she assured *Thalia* must be 'a married woman's arts and manœuvres,' of the attentions of her affianced. Nor were her feelings at all soothed by discovering, after a time, in the stage-box, her own Adolphus in attendance on the most beautiful person she had ever seen; exquisitely fair, apparently in the very first bloom of youth, with a profusion of sunny tresses, and the form and face of *Psyche*. Another gentleman of military air, handsome, commanding, but rather embonpoint, rivalled the Captain in devotion to the beautiful creature, who soon rivetted all attention, and was the mark for

every opera glass and lorgnette. Inez pointed him out to the Evergreens as the gentleman who had been in Captain Fitzopal's cab when she was so nearly run over, and whose rude stare and impertinent laughter had, with the Captain's, been the cause of her accident.

She glanced kindly at Mr. Luckless, as she spoke, expecting of course some amiable compliment on the occasion; but though he seemed very anxious to conceal himself, it was evident that his whole attention was rivetted on the stage-box, which contained the beautiful blonde, whom several whispers in the adjoining boxes proclaimed to be 'Lady Fathom.' Our heiress, who, in her own peculiar style, was looking extremely pretty, and who had made a most elegant and becoming toilet, felt not a little wounded and jealous at the incessant watch Luckless kept over the lovely and sparkling Lady Fathom. .

"If that is the style he admires," she thought to herself, (while tears filled her eyes, and she experienced that choking sensation in the

throat, and that throb at the heart, which is jealousy's knock at the door,) "I have not a chance of pleasing him. And he actually turns pale as he watches her, tears are in his eyes; perhaps she was his first love—perhaps she jilted him; if so—poor, poor Luckless!"

At this moment a little commotion occurred among the party they were making the objects of so close a scrutiny. An old, quizzical-looking fellow, with green spectacles, and two or three black patches on his face, entered the stage-box. The beautiful Lady Fathom held out both her hands to welcome him; and motioning Captain Fitzopal away, made this oddity take his place beside her.

She smiled in his old face with so much arch fondness, and seemed to be taking such pains to explain the play to him, that Inez glanced at Luckless to ascertain if he was not jealous of the new-comer. She was surprised to see a smile on his countenance, from which all pallor and distress had vanished. His eyes met hers, and

gazed long and tenderly at her ; and then taking a seat behind her, he devoted himself to her the whole evening in the most gratifying manner.

“What a strange being he is !” thought Inez. “He sees she is married to that old fellow ; and that she loves him, that is very evident ; and so having no hope there, I suppose he takes pity on me. Or if he even did like her, he was jealous of those coxcombs. It is all a mystery ; but he certainly seems very fond of me ; so I shall not trouble myself about it, and that odious Captain—he will not even see poor Evergreen. Well, if it all is as I suspect, there is some retribution in store for him. How miserable he looks, at that other bold fellow too ; they’re both in love with that exquisite Lady Fathom, I do believe, and both jealous of that dear old fellow, who of course is neither more nor less than her husband Sir Noah. Capital ! he looks as if he came out of the Ark ; but it’s a comfort to see she’s so fond of him. I dare say in all really loveable attributes, those coxcombs are not to be compared to him.”

These remarks, Inez addressed to her companion, who seemed so delighted with her sentiments and her powers of observation, and so pleased at the idea of the two military coxcombs being jealous of the old husband, that Inez began to think she had been mistaken in fancying that Luckless himself was smitten with the beautiful Lady Fathom. Inez had all the poignant jealousy of a daughter of the East, and she felt sure that had he been in love himself with the lovely blonde, he would not have smiled so complacently to see her leaning on her husband's arm, gazing so kindly in his face, and whispering so fondly in his ear.

And Ada *was* fond of old Sir Noah, very fond of him, very grateful to him, for all the luxuries, comforts, and delights with which he surrounded her; and she was pleased with him that night in particular, because she had made a great point of his coming to the play with her, and he had promised he would join her there; and Adolphus and Major Smiley, who had been disposed to



quiz a little on the occasion, had betted her, the one a dozen pairs of gloves, and the other a case of Eau de Cologne, that Sir Noah would forget all about it. And during the first and second acts they had triumphed not a little ; when, lo ! at the commencement of the third, Sir Noah appeared. Some good angel had reminded him of his promise, or perhaps it had been recalled to him by poor Stubbs, who heard the Captain and the Major joking about it, and betting with his Lady on the subject, as he handed the coffee—at any rate, there Sir Noah was ! And how, or why he was there, even he seemed quite to have forgotten. Stubbs had seen him safe into the stage-box ; and Ada, delighted at her triumph, attributed his bewilderment to the lights, the music, the crowd, and the fact that Sir Noah had not been inside a theatre for many years before. But she was touched at what seemed to her a proof that he cared more for her and her wishes than she had ever fancied he did ; nor was this the less flattering, because Adolphus and

Major Smiley saw it too. Ada was virtuous, and she was proud of her virtue, and as her admirers were very fond of hinting at Sir Noah's entire absorption in other pursuits, and total forgetfulness that he had a wife, (a species of tactics much in vogue among the cavaliers of married women), Ada was much delighted with Sir Noah, for an attention which implied so much.

Poor Ada! her self-reliance was entire. She never deemed it possible she could err, much less fall! In the anguish of her alarm about her child, she had taken herself severely to task for the vain pleasure she felt in her cousin's devotion. Sudden grief is such a searcher of the heart; but even then it had brought her in guilty only of vanity and frivolity. No thought that she could either inspire or feel a guilty interest in her cousin, had sullied her heart. It was not likely to do so now that her life was a succession of dazzling delights and beguiling pleasures. Yes, to all outward appearances, Ada loved her husband. The young Captain, judging by them,

grew jealous even of old Sir Noah; but Major Smiley, a more confirmed man of the world, he was far more jealous when he saw her shun her cousin's melancholy gaze, than of the fondest smile she bestowed on old Sir Noah. He would rather have seen her throw her beautiful white arms round Sir Noah's neck, than have beheld her avoid shaking hands with Adolphus.

Miss Evergreen, in her turban and full Eastern costume, and convinced in her own mind that she looked her best, was very anxious to meet the Fathoms and Adolphus in the lobby. Mr. Luckless seemed as anxious to avoid them. He pulled his hat down and his cloak up, and Inez, convinced he had some reason for wishing to be unseen, kindly seconded his efforts. In spite of the Evergreens, they managed so that the Fathom party did not see them, although they were near enough to admire Lady Fathom's profuse tresses and wreath of wild-flowers, her soft treble dress of Indian muslin, and the beautiful arm, with her sole ornament an antique

armlet, with which she clung to old Sir Noah, and to him alone ! They heard her silver laugh and marked her light step ; and hearing that laugh, Miss Evergreen thought it amazing that Captain Fitzopal could not hear the impassioned tone in which she exclaimed, " Adolphus ! "

" None are so deaf as those who will not hear " —had Miss Evergreen understood this, the mystery would have been unravelled.

The Captain and the Major accepted Lady Fathom's invitation to a *petit souper* ; as did Luckless, who seemed in the highest spirits, a similar proposal from Miss Evergreen, suggested by Inez.

" At any rate, ere long, he will be all my own," thought Miss Evergreen, as she sat down to supper ; " and then it will be my fault, if any other has power to charm him."

Luckless and Inez parted apparently with great reluctance, and not without many arrangements for excursions together, which the Evergreens heard with dismay, as they thought of Devereux Spight.

## CHAPTER XVI.

A few days after the appearance of the *Fathoms* at the Haymarket Theatre, and the day preceding the important ball Ada was about to give, a country gentleman, rather advanced in life, and of somewhat quizzical appearance and costume, paused on his way to the West End, from an hotel in Covent Garden, to ascertain the cause of a disturbance in the street, which had assembled a considerable crowd. This country gentleman, spectacted, weather-beaten, and old-fashioned, had rather a sarcastic expression of countenance, and listened with an inward chuckle to a very curious

contention, in which, we grieve to say, our dear old Sir Noah and his man Stubbs played a very conspicuous part.

Yes, there stood Sir Noah, his hat and wig off, much excited, and keeping the police at bay, with a giant thigh-bone of some antediluvian monster, which bone he had been carrying under his arm, while several old books and fossils fell around him. By his side stood Stubbs, brandishing a worm-eaten folio.

"I warn you!" cried Stubbs, choking with passion, "to stand off. This is my master, Sir Noah Fathom, the great antediluvian—one as knows how the world was peopled afore ever it was made, with great Mausoleums, of which that ere's a thigh-bone."

"Poleege!" cried an infuriate butcher, with a wooden tray, bare armed, and in a blue apron, "never you mind that gammon; you do your duty, if you please."

"Well," said a quiet orderly policeman, "let me hear your account of this affair."

"My account! why I caught that ere rum old chap a hammering and a chipping away at the wery foundation of my 'ous yander; he've took a stone clean out, and he's a 'iding it this blessed minute under his coat."

"And pray, feller!" cried Stubbs, squaring up to him, "what's the foundation o' your 'ouse, compared to that of a grand new theary, my master means to build on that very stone."

The Policeman looked puzzled, and drew near Sir Noah, who hugging up the stone in the flap of his coat, and peeping at it fondly, exclaimed: "My treasure! it is safe—the only specimen in Europe of that ammonite."

"Poleege!" cried the butcher, "you hears that, you hears him own he's found a treasure at the bottom of my ouse; by all the laws o' property, that ere treasure's mine."

"Please, Sir!" said the Policeman respectfully to Sir Noah, "to produce what you've taken from this man's house." (Then added aside, to

the butcher, "Don't you see he's as mad as a March hare?")

"Police!" said Sir Noah, with dignity, "the man may put his own price on it!"

"There, you hear that! It'll be the best stone you ever turned. May I beg you to produce it, Sir?" he said to Sir Noah.

"Will you promise no one shall touch it, police?"

"I do promise, Sir," said the policeman.

Sir Noah then, with great pride, produced a large stone.

"Why, dang it!" said the butcher, "the old chap is cracked sure enough; drat it, I might have guessed as much afore; let 'im keep the stone, poleege, as long as he pays sommut 'ansome for dilapidations. Mad as a March 'are, surely!"

"Just you say that ere again!" said Stubbs, approaching the butcher, with clenched fists.

"Mad! you low feller! as can't keep pace with



the march o' hintellek, you snail on the grand intellectooal railway! . . . You——"

The butcher being pugnacious, they were about to close, when the police rushed in, crying, "Hollo, there, you! keep the peace, if you please, or you're off to the station 'ous. And you, Sir, what'll you give this poor man for the damage you've done his 'ouse?"

"I'm a wery poor man," said the butcher; "beastesses is ris! I've a sight of bad debts, besides a sick wife and six small children!"

Sir Noah, on hearing this, put his hand in his pocket, took out a handful of gold and silver, amounting perhaps to six or seven pounds, and gave it to the butcher, who exclaimed:

"Well, I never! thank 'ee koindly, Sir; at the same rate, you're welcome to all the stones in the wall." Then fearing anything might happen to rob him of his prize, the butcher shouldered his tray, and hurried off.

"Come, good people, move on! move on!" said the policeman.

"Please, Sir," cried a saucy looking boy, "not to forget me; I helped, Sir."

"Yes, you young wampire!" cried Stubbs, pushing him aside—"that you did, to kick up this here illiterate row! Stand aside, and let me and measter pass, can't you? Why, here's Squire Grumbleby, sure enough!" he added, perceiving the elderly gentleman before described, approaching. "Your servant, Squire. Measter! Measter! (bawling in Sir Noah's ear) here's Squire Grumbleby!"

Squire Grumbleby held out his hand to Sir Noah, exclaiming, "My dear old friend, how are you?"

Sir Noah, still quite intent on his geological prize, answered in an absent manner: "Pretty well—pretty well;" then cried with enthusiasm: "Look here! look here! Behold a perfect specimen of this ammonite—the only one in Europe!"

"Pshaw!" said Grumbleby, "are you still mounted on that old hobby, and so taken up with

a bit of rubbishing stone, that you treat one of your oldest friends like a stranger? For shame, Noah!"

The tone struck even Sir Noah's preoccupied mind. He looked up, recognised Grumbleby, held out his hand, and exclaimed: "Welcome! ten thousand times, my dear Grumbleby! where did you come from? There, I'll just wrap it up—the most perfect specimen!"

„Pshaw!" growled Grumbleby, snatching at it.

Sir Noah hastily put it in his pocket.

"There I hope it's safe! Why, my dear fellow, I'm rejoiced to see you! Come home with me! But, stop!"

He stoops to pick up a bone and a fossil.

"Nonsense!" said Grumbleby, pulling him by the arm. "Come along, you've got a crowd round you already. Let Stubbs pick up all this rubbish. Where's your wife?"

"In the wilds of Connecticut," said Sir Noah, grasping his ammonite.

“What! your wife in the wilds of Connecticut?” snarled Grumbleby.

“No, no!” said Sir Noah, “I was thinking of this ammonite, of which the only specimen ”

“And you forget you have a specimen of a gay young wife at home, Fathom! But others have better memories!”

“What do you mean, Grumbleby? my darling little Ada?”

“Of course I do! how do you think your darling little Ada likes being left at home, while you are pottering among musty fossils and worm-eaten folios—kicking up rows, and pulling down houses!”

“Oh, but she isn’t alone, sweet little pet; her cousin, your nephew Fitzopal, he’s sure to be with her; he can amuse her much better than I can; he likes dancing the whirligig, and singing, and thrumming the lute, and shopping, and——”

“And he likes her! and she likes him a deuced deal better than any young coxcomb should like, or be liked by, a wife of mine, I can

tell you—when I have one (which,” he added *sotto voce*, “may be soon, if I find this Indian heiress to my taste.”)

During this dialogue, they were walking arm-in-arm towards Sir Noah’s house. Suddenly Sir Noah fancied he missed the stone which had hitherto, in the pocket of his frock coat, been bobbing up against his legs. He started, stood still, fumbled about for it, found it, and then with a sigh of inexpressible relief, exclaimed: “Thank heaven, it’s safe! such a chance! the only specimen——”

“Fathom!” said Grumbleby, sternly griping Sir Noah’s arm, and grinding his own teeth—“listen to me, will you? I’m your friend, your old friend, and I hate to see you such a confounded fool! I’ve come up to Town partly on business of my own—but principally on what ought to be yours. Reports have reached me in Yorkshire, though they haven’t you in London, that you leave your wife all day to the attentions of a handsome young coxcomb; and though he’s

my sister's son, I believe that where women are concerned, he's as unprincipled and heartless a *roué* as the hero of a modern French novel."

Sir Noah upon this, a little startled, exclaimed :  
"What ! Eh ? Grumbleby, you don't mean ?  
Oh, you can't, why she doats on me. Never was  
such a fond, devoted little wife ! Good heavens !  
why what would you have me do ?"

"Do ! Fathom ! why never leave her, night or  
day. Walk, ride, drive, sit with her ; coax,  
fondle, and amuse her yourself, as I mean to do  
my wife when I marry. Catch any one else  
amusing Gregory Grumbleby's wife, that's all !"

"But I do amuse her, sweet soul ! Whenever  
I find a new specimen I take it to her ; I read to  
her, at least when I can find her, all the trans-  
actions of the geological and antiquarian societies  
at home and abroad—all I write myself—I've  
given her a key of my own museum—I've pre-  
sented her with a collection of fossils—I often  
take her with me to the British Museum (at least  
I used to) ; but, come along home with me ; I

dare say we shall find her dusting the ichsyothaurus, or sorting the ammonites. Little darling! I begged her to do so, to amuse her during my absence! The ichsyothaurus dolichodorus—to polish up, sweet pet!”

“Which of them? the ichsyothaurus or Ada? the former, doubtless! Well, it’s a lesson to me! Oh, Mrs. Grumbleby! but here we are!”

“Where’s your lady?” asked Sir Noah, with unwonted energy, of the man who opened the door.

“Out, Sir Noah.”

“Alone?” asked Grumbleby.

“No, Sir!”

“Not alone!” said Sir Noah, rather impatiently.

“No, Sir!”

“Who is with her?”

“Captain Fitzopal, Sir!”

“How long has she been out?”

“Since breakfast, Sir!”

“Walking?”

"No, Sir!"

"Driving?"

"Yes, Sir!"

"Where's the child?"

"With my lady, Sir!"

They entered Sir Noah's study.

"Come," said Grumbleby, "I'm glad little Noah is with her; a child is often its mother's guardian cherub."

"I wish," said Sir Noah, a little vexed, "Ada had been here to welcome you!"

"I wish she were here to welcome *you*, Fathom. However, it's your own fault. If a husband's always *absent*, either in mind or body, or both, a wife sees no reason why she should be the only stay-at-home. Let him devote himself to Science, and she will to Pleasure. If he flirts with the Muses, she will with some confounded, idle, lounging Cavalier, Cecisbeo, or Platonic Lover. Let me see no such propensity in Mrs. Grumbleby (that is to be); her pleasures, Fathom, must all centre in me! But that of course they



will, as I shall devote myself entirely to her, and to the children. . . . . Ah ! I hear laughter and light footsteps. Listen ! it's your wife, Fathom !"

"Ta ! ta !" said a sweet young voice outside ;  
"ta ! baby dear ! Look at the noble boy, Adolphus ! he's sleepy, Janet ! Put him to bed ! Good bye, my precious pet ! Mamma's dear, dear, exquisite darling ! Sing him to sleep, Janet ! I shall be up presently to see him. Come, Adolphus !" she said, opening the door, not of Sir Noah's study, but her own boudoir, which adjoined it, "what a delightful drive we've had. Let's see, you dine with us, and after dinner we go first to see the new play, then to Mrs. Lighthouse's rout, and then to Lady Greville's ball. I suppose Major Smiley will come to dinner, and go with us !"

"Do you hear ?" whispered Grumbleby to Sir Noah, "you're not mentioned as one of the party !"

"Oh !" said Sir Noah, vehemently, "nothing would please her more than my going with her ;

she's always begging me to do so—sweet little Ada!"

"Hark!" said Lady Fathom, "surely I heard Sir Noah call me. Dearest, are *you* there?"

"Yes, my sweet love, and some one else—guess who!"

• Lady Fathom threw open the door, and appeared most elegantly dressed, and in high beauty and spirits. She rushed forward to welcome Grumbleby, followed by Captain Fitzopal, carrying her shawl, her tiny reticule, and the smallest of parasols.

"A perfect specimen," growled Grumbleby, half aside, "of a married lady's beau—that most odious of French importations."

"My dear Mr. Grumbleby!" said Lady Fathom—"thrice welcome!"

She offered her hand.

"I rejoice to see your Ladyship so blooming," said Grumbleby, rather stiffly.

"I am very glad to see you here, Uncle," said Fitzopal, languidly.

"More than I am to see *you* here, Nephew," growled Grumbleby, while Sir Noah kissed Lady Fathom's hand.

"What are your arrangements for this evening, my lovely one?" asked Sir Noah.

"What?" cried Lady Fathom, in amazement.

"I mean, what parties are you going to, my love?"

"La! why do you want to know?" laughed Lady Fathom.

"That I may decide how to dress, my love!" said Sir Noah, gravely.

"You, Sir Noah!"

"Yes, darling! will my company be disagreeable to you?"

"Disagreeable!" said Lady Fathom, "no, my own dear Noah, I am quite delighted at the proposal. Dress! why you must be as gay as the gayest. You'll be quite a lion! Wait a minute, and I'll come and help you rout out the 'fossil remains' of your wardrobe—quite antediluvian, I

fear! Will you dance to-night too? Will you waltz? Can you waltz?"

She went playfully up to him, and began to twirl him round. Sir Noah was evidently much delighted, but being unused to such exercise, he staggered. Lady Fathom placed him carefully in an arm chair, and then went up to Mr. Grumbleby:—

"I beg your pardon, my dear half-uncle, and whole friend, but wont you take some refreshment?"

"No! no! I am refreshed, I thank you," said Grumbleby, rubbing his hands.

Sir Noah glanced triumphantly at his old friend. Captain Fitzopal appeared a little down-cast.

"Oh!" said Lady Fathom, "I am so rejoiced to have you with me. You shall see whether our London belles are not more bewitching than the *Dinotherrium*, and more agile than the *Ichthyosaurus Dolychodeiros*. You know you declared I was when you courted me!"

“Well!” said Sir Noah, “as Grumbleby won’t take any luncheon, and will dine with us, come you, Ada dear, and look over my waistcoats, and see what you like me to wear!”

“*Au revoir* then, Messieurs!” said Ada, taking her husband’s arm; “we’ll be back presently.”

As she smiled up into his face, Sir Noah looked fondly at her, and turned to cast a triumphant glance at Grumbleby. Ada dropped a rose-bud from her bosom. Sir Noah gallantly picked it up, kissed it, and put in his button-hole. Lady Fathom called him “a gallant old love”—and they left the room together.

Grumbleby and his nephew were left alone. They were both standing, in true English fashion, on the hearth rug, their backs to the fire-place, though there was no fire.

They formed a very curious contrast.

Grumbleby, rather short and pursy, about fifty, in drabs and top boots, a green cut-away, and a yellow kerseymere waistcoat; his eyes keen, eyebrows grey and shaggy; complexion very florid;

hair sprinkled with powder; a white cravat, a heavy riding whip, a massive gold chain and a large bunch of seals hanging from his fob, and a resolute, sarcastic-looking country gentleman all over!

Captain Fitzopal, pale, slender, tall; wearing his dark waving hair rather long, and very glossy and perfumed, and a small moustache on his fine upper lip; an undress military coat (blue and braided), a black satin stock, a delicate chain round his breast as guard to a tiny gold watch, a little horsewhip fit for Oberon, and a pair of Le Hocq's smallest and most dazzling boots.

As Grumbleby gave himself two or three little jerks on his heels, and knit his shaggy brows, Captain Fitzopal threw one elbow on the marble mantel-piece, and gazed calmly at his Uncle, tapping his little boot the while with his tiny whip.

"Capital!" said Grumbleby at last, "ha! ha! ha! I'm very glad Fathom and his wife hit it off so well!"

"Oh dear! I forgot!" said Fitzopal, picking

up Lady Fathom's little parasol, and putting it carefully in a case on the table; "safe bind! safe find, uncle!" he added, seeing his uncle watching him with a sneer.

"She seems so very fond of him!" said the uncle—"Ha! ha! ha!"

"Darby and Joan!" said Fitzopal; "it's too plebeian—too absurd—by Jove it is!"

"Is it, sir?" said Grumbleby, going close up to his nephew. "Boy, I say," he added in a stern low voice, "I'm afraid you're acting like a d—d scoundrel."

"Really, uncle!" said the Captain, with the most provoking affectation, "if it were not for your age, and our relationship, I'd have you out! I would indeed—or I'd post you in every club in St. James's."

"Pshaw, boy!" said Grumbleby, "there's an end of all that nonsense. The duellist is a dog, but a dog who has had his day. Murder or suicide are not *now* essentials to the character of a gentleman. My poor friend, the gallant Fawcitt,

was, I hope, one of the last victims offered up on a savage altar, in a country calling itself Christian."

"Such opinions, uncle, wouldn't be tolerated among *us*; they'd be the joke of the mess—you'd be the laughing-stock of "ours"—you would, upon my honour, now!"

"Honour! sir!" said Grumbleby, purpling, "how dare you talk of honour, when you are so dishonourably doing all you can to seduce your friend's wife—a mere girl!—a being so young and artless, and wedded to one so blind, so absent, so confiding, so hospitable!"

"Why certainly," said Fitzop, "if she were not the one, and he the other, they'd see deuced little of me, I promise you. But you're mistaken, uncle; you are, upon my honour. I am, as you say, his most intimate friend——"

"And her deadliest foe; for what foe so deadly to a married woman as the man who, whether professing love or not, acts so that the world proclaims him her lover!"



"Platonic, merely platonic, I assure you—just as you might be!"

"As I might be!" cried Grumbleby, stamping and purpling; "boy, I am no cold-blooded fop; I couldn't be the Platonic Lover of any woman living. My hair is grey, sir—but my heart is green!——"

"Ha! ha! ha! then there I have the advantage of you; my head is green, but my heart is grey. I *am* capable of that refined, exalted, and delicate sentiment called Platonic Love—something more tender than friendship, and less mundane than passion!"

"Boy! let me tell you there is no such thing as Platonic Love between man and woman. Don't deceive yourself—don't deceive her! . . . . Give up this most dangerous intimacy, and I'll bestow on you——"

"Well!" said the Captain, eagerly, "what?"

"My unlimited approbation!" said Grumbleby, pompously.

"I thought, sir," said Fitzopal, with a sneer,

"you were going to bestow on me unlimited credit at your banker's."

"Then, sir, you thought me a fool!"

"A good-natured one at any rate."

"I beg, boy, you'll alter your opinion."

"That, uncle, I have already done. I find you deuced crabbed and close—I always did!"

"And always will! Then you don't chuse to give up this dangerous intimacy?"

"No, I do not; (at least," he added aside, "not in its present stage.")

"And you call yourself a gentleman?"

"I am a Captain in the 10th; I am son of General Fitzopal, and nephew, on my mother's side, to Squire Grumbleby of Grumbleby Hall."

"And are you aware, sir, while you're idling and philandering here, that Miss Castleton is in England?"

"I am."

"Well, sir! you know too the rival interests established between us, by Old Castleton's extraordinary will?"

"I do know something of that old manie's absurdity."

"I wish, boy, you had half his sense. But what I meant to observe was, that had I found you a youth of feeling, honour, and even common understanding, I had almost resolved, considering your debts, your poverty, and the little talent you have shown for getting on in the world, to withdraw what you may find a very formidable rivalship! —"

The Captain laughed affectedly, and said: "Thank you! but don't trouble yourself—I'd rather you didn't give in. There's something so very *piquant* in being pitted against you: ha! ha! ha!"

"Then you defy me to do my best, boy?"

"Your best or your worst—ha! ha! ha! He'd not have a ghost of a chance," thought the Captain, "in any case; but with the march I've stolen upon him, I can carry her off if I will at a minute's notice."

"So be it then, boy; fair play and an open

field. And now, my young peacock, perhaps I may be able to prove to you, that a sensible woman of seven-and-twenty, may find something in a man more attractive than even moustachios and musk."

"I presume, uncle, you mean powder and spectacles."

"Yes, sir, even powder and spectacles, if spectacles made him alive to her beauties, and foppery only to his own. Well, we start fair! It is an open and an honourable chase. Win her if you can, and I'll give you —— my blessing. But the other is base poaching, and converts you into a human, or rather an inhuman, lurcher. There's no excuse for it, even with fops like you now-a-days; these degrading flirtations with married women are not only *bad*, but what you'll think more important, they're bad taste, boy! They're not only out of character, but they're out of date! There were times, alas! when Courts set an example of conjugal infidelity, and faithless bosoms disgraced the star they wore. But now,

boy, Constancy sits upon a throne! The palace fire-side now boasts those virtues that dignify the cottage ingle-nook. By the bye"—taking out a huge pocket-book—"I forgot—my dear boy"—he looked kindly at Fitzopal—"it would be unkind not to give you this."

"My dear uncle!" said Fitzopal, drawing near.

Grumbleby took out—not, as Fitzopal expected, a bank note! but an extract from a York newspaper.

"This, my dear boy, is the speech in which I proposed our lovely young Queen's health, at the dinner for the encouragement of matrimony and the promotion of conjugal and domestic happiness—myself in the chair—I'll read it to you!"

"Oh, I haven't time now—it seems so long!—and I must be off to dress!"

"Well, after dinner, but just hear the impromptu I wound up with. It was applauded to the very echo. After drawing, as you'll see in the speech, a vivid picture of bachelor misery, and wedded happiness—of the horrors of wedded in-

fidelity, and the beauty of conjugal affection—I exclaimed :

‘Now the first lady in the land stands forth,  
The modest champion of domestic worth ;  
Now that in courts and palaces we find,  
The household virtues worship’d and enshrined ;  
Falsehood no more in stars and gems is seen,  
She slinks away abashed, to haunts obscene ;  
For to be pure, is to be like our Queen !’

There, my boy, beat that if you can ; and let me tell you, that if Miss Castleton is a woman of taste and feeling, those lines will go farther with her than a taper waist and a pair of tight boots. I must be off to the India House to-morrow ; I suppose I shall find out there where she is !”

“Ah do, uncle !” said Fitzopal ; “and then let me know, will you ? it’ll save me a journey down into those horrid regions in the dreaded East.—*Au revoir !*” And he departed.

“Puppy ! dolt ! dandy ! unprincipled fop ! and headless idler ! now will I do my best to cut you out with the heiress, and to spoil your vile

sport with my old friend's lovely little wife. And yet, if you had shown one spark of sense or proper feeling, I'd have left the field to you, and even have helped you with a few hundreds, to enable you to come forth as a braw wooer! But now I see no woman has a chance of happiness with such a fop—English only in extravagance and absurdity—French in profligacy and effeminate conceit! No, no, I'll have the girl myself—and make her happy too!"

## CHAPTER XVII.

The day of Lady Fathom's fancy ball arrived, and all was joyful bustle and delightful confusion in the splendid mansion in Belgrave Square, which was to behold the *reunion* of all the noblest and gayest people assembled in London in the height of the season.

The arrangements were all on the most costly and splendid scale; Gillow, Gunter, Collinet, were all presiding in their separate departments. A Royal Duke was expected; all the ambassadors and their august partners had accepted; and lords and ladies were coming in shoals.



Lady Revel, thinking this a good opportunity for introducing her youngest daughter, (Ada's sister Fanny) had invited herself to spend a few days with Lady Fathom ; and the amiable Ada was rejoiced that Fanny should commence her London season with so brilliant a festival.

Ada awoke betimes on this important day, and strange to say, instead of the gay spirits with which, since the recovery of her darling, she had hitherto sprung from her bed, she arose from a depressing and most vivid dream in an agony of terror and distress. This dream was one, in which she saw her brother Wildair, whom she had always fondly loved, stretched dead before her on a wretched pallet, in some horrid dungeon ! With the frightful redundancy of objects common in a dream, she fancied the whole floor swarmed with rats, mice, toads, and that one serpent was winding his way over them all to her feet ! As she looked on her brother's ghastly face, she heard a hissing voice whisper, "Starvation !" She felt a cold slimy coil round her throat, the

serpent had twined round her, and was hissing this horrible word in her ear ! And then the scene changed, and little Noah was playing with the reptiles around, and lifting his uncle's lean and lifeless hand. And the serpent darted at him ! and in the agony of seeing this, and the effort to save her child, Ada awoke with a scream. She sate up in bed ; a cold sweat came out upon her brow. Sir Noah still slept, but disturbed by her scream, he murmured in his dream—"No ! No ! Ada loves me, and me only, sweet Ada !" And then he sank into a deeper sleep.

Ada stole quietly from her bed. On the tables and the chairs were many things connected with the coming fête—hosts of expensive baubles—and in her dressing-room, proudly displayed by her maid, the dress in which Ada was to shine that night. As Ada looked upon the jewelled garb—the costly lace, in rich profusion—she put her hands before her eyes, and shutting out the bright morning sun, and the garish luxury around, she saw nothing but her dead brother, and heard the

word "Starvation" in her ear; and then she thought of her darling little Noah, and throwing her wrapper around her, and thrusting her little white feet into her furred slippers, she ran up to Noah's nursery, and found him in the rosiest of slumbers; but Jauret, who had just received a letter by the morning post, in tears by his side.

Janet's little boy was unwell, and Mrs. Koddle had written to tell her so. Lady Fathom pointed out to Janet, that Mrs. Koddle said particularly it was nothing serious or alarming, and then she gave Janet leave to repair to him immediately. On her return to her dressing-room, Ada was fully convinced of the folly of attaching any importance to dreams, for on opening a letter directed in a disguised hand, she read, with a beating heart, and a glowing cheek, as follows.

"Beloved Ada—

"Be in no alarm about me, I am safe, well, and even happy; I only heard a day or two ago of your return from the Continent, or you should have heard from me before. But I know

you and Sir Noah would insist on helping me, and after all he has done I cannot bear to let him know my difficulty; besides I take a sort of pride in getting out of the scrape I was fool enough to get into. I feel as if nothing else could quite reinstate me in my own opinion. I have seen you, sweet sister, lately—lovelier and dearer than ever. By the bye, darling, keep those military fellows at a distance; they do young wives no good. Cling to Sir Noah, and remember what I used to dilate upon, the dangers of “*self-reliance*.” Always, in any difficulty, consult your husband—he is the only fitting counsellor you can have. Long before you expect it, I shall clasp you to my heart, if but for a moment. God bless you, my Ada! and preserve you, your husband, and your child, prays your devoted scape-grace of a brother,

W. R.”

All the painful impression caused by Ada’s dream wore away as she read this letter, and now the cup of joy seemed full indeed, and Ada’s heart bounded with anticipated delight.

It had been decided after much cogitation, that the romance of Kenilworth should furnish the characters to be represented by the Fathom party. Ada was of course to realize perhaps the most exquisite vision of even Sir Walter's fancy—the beautiful, the bewitching Amy Robsart! Sir Noah was to be the old knight, her father; Fitzopal having decided on being Leicester (much to Smiley's inward fury and jealousy,) he was obliged to personate either the unloved Tressilian, or the demon Varney—he choose the former. Ada's sister Fanny was pretty Janet Foster, and Lady Revel was graciously pleased to sweep thro' the pageant as Queen Elizabeth, and the more willingly, because she had by her a gorgeous dress in which she had once before personated that august Sovereign Lady at a Court fancy ball. The rest of the characters were represented by mere acquaintances, proud of forming part of Lady Fathom's own pageant.

Grumbleby could not be persuaded to assume any character, or adopt any costume; but as

every one else did, the singularity made him conspicuous in spite of himself, and he formed an admirable representation of a Yorkshire Squire, which did just as well as anything else.

By eleven o'clock, the brilliantly lighted rooms were filled with noble guests. The floors had been elaborately chalked in a new and exquisite style; the decorations (abundance of delightful and rare shrubs and flowers not forgotten) were unique for taste and splendor. Even the *blasés*, frequenters of all the first fêtes of many seasons, were roused to admiration. The musicians caught an extra inspiration from the scene. Knots of foreigners got together to marvel and to sneer.

"*Mais c'est donc un millionnaire que Sir Noah!*" said an *attaché*, newly imported, trying not to look amazed.

"*Ah ! cela, mon cher !*" said his friend; "*il faut absolument épouser une Anglaise ! elles sont gauches a faire peur, mais pour la fortune ! il n'y a que cela !*"

"*Je suis de ton avis ma foi, et c'est que je vais*

*me dépêcher ! quel luxe ! Mon Dieu ! et c'est Miladi Fadom ! cette adorable blonde !... Mais elle est belle à miracle ! Quelle fraîcheur ! qu'elle grace ! quelle tournure ! Ah ne me dis pas que les Anglaises sont gauches ! c'est la plus jolie personne que je n'ai jamais vue. Ou est, son mari !"*

*" Le voilà en lunettes !"*

*" Comment ? tu te moques de moi ! Ce vieux papa la !"*

*" Effectivement—mais c'est un millionnaire."*

*" Quel dommage !"*

*" Pas du tout, elle a eu raison, la fortune de ce vieux moribond c'est le piedestal qu'il lui fallait, après cela, ne perds pas ton temps, mon cousin, à adorer cette belle—sougez au cinq cent francs que je t'ai avancé pour le voyage. Il faut me les rendre, j'en ai drablement besoin."*

*" Sitôt que tu as trouvé a te marier avantageusement il faut me rembourser. Levé toi je vais te faire présenter a quelques dansenses ! Voilà deux demoiselles que Latour étres assure immensément riches !"*

*"Mais ce sont des horreurs!"*

*"Ah, pour cela les jolies personnes en Angleterre sont, pour la plupart sans dot. Viens—et sois raisonnable!"*

And misled by Latour's information, the fat Baron Vonherz, got his young cousin, the Count Vonfitter, introduced to——Thalia Evergreen!"

Thalia, in her costume of Diana, so generously supplied by the lavish and amiable Inez, looked so plump, so self-satisfied, and so happy, that any one would have believed she was very well to do; since the consciousness of poverty generally gives an anxious expression to the countenance, and a fidgetty restlessness and excitement to the manner. But the Evergreens were by nature sanguine and self-satisfied; they never looked forward, at least not to evils, however probable, though they did with confidence to the most unlikely of successes; their motto was, *Nil desperandum!* their constant prophecy, that "Something would turn up!" And as Thalia had remarked to Melpomene, as they made their costly toilets



together, surrounded by luxuries, which they owed to Inez, the result proved they were right:—

“Here,” she said, fixing on her brow the brilliant crescent which proclaimed her the virgin huntress, and advancing her very handsome though rather stout leg in its silver buskin—“here we are, sister! in spite of all evil prophecies—all the croakings of Devereux Spight—and the moans of Mc. Peevish and Fitzplagiari—better off than we ever were in our lives! you engaged to a man of fashion, after your own heart, and I, though still fancy-free, with a strong presentiment that, in this enchanting costume, the huntress will make a good shot.”

“Well! may Fate realize that notion, my own sister!” said the gorgeous Sultana, (Miss Evergreen,) clasping ‘Diana’ to her heart; “Poor orphans that we are; we have had a sad struggle, and all I wish is that the same day which give me to my Adolphus, may unite you, my love, to some one worthy of your genius and your

beauty. But I hear Inez calling! I wish we were safe off with our future lords, my Thalia, before Devereux Spight discovers the disastrous fact, that that wilful little Indian Queen is violently in love with that beggarly fellow Luckless. Spight's rage will know no bounds when he finds it out; he has made up his mind to have her himself, with her five-hundred a year; and he is so vindictive, and so venomous, that he is quite capable of overthrowing all my prospects with Fitzopal, in impotent revenge; for what can I do with a resolute, spirited, self-willed creature like Clementina? Any opposition would only rob us of all advantage from her wealth, and accelerate the catastrophe. But come, sister, come! never did we either of us look so lovely! I long to shine before my affianced, my chosen, my Adolphus!" Such had been the conversation which had preceded, in the Evergreens' bower, their departure for the ball.

Inez, in her gipsy dress, looked very arch and pretty, and glided about, startling people not a

little by her shrewd prophecies of the future and records of the past, founded, as most gipsey prophecies and records are, on previously acquired knowledge.

Thalia danced to her heart's content with the young Count Vonflitter, and made him introduce plenty of partners, moustachioed and titled foreigners, to her sister, who watched Adolphus's devotion to Lady Fathom with a jealous eye; but was a little soothed by his assuring her he had reasons for his conduct.

Devereux Spight, who had (as most very small men have) a very exaggerated notion of the size and beauty of his figure, and who wished in his costume to convey some idea of his mental characteristics, was Apollo! and a more insignificant, sarcastic, conceited little horror has seldom been seen even at a *Bal Costumé*. He was besides in a very ill humour, found his bow and his quiver a great nuisance, and was not a little disgusted at the affinity of costume his own ill-judged choice had established between himself and Thalia Evergreen.

Mc. Peevish and Fitzplagiar, linked together as Castor and Pollux, looked certainly pre-eminently absurd, and excited a good deal of ridicule; but they were together, and so they bore it pretty well, and retaliated with a good deal of pointless sarcasm—but whenever they saw Devereux Spight coming their way, they moved off; and he could not find an opportunity of venting on them any of the venom with which he was overflowing.

To relieve himself a little, he sate down behind some orange trees, and began a bitter but spirited lampoon on the whole affair for the next Sunday's *Hornet*. Little Noah, in honor of whose recovery this splendid fête had been devised, had been brought down in the early part of the evening with a spangled tunic and a pair of wings, in a basket of roses, representing Cupid; and so lovely did he look with his golden curls and cherub face and form, that the young ladies quarreled for a kiss, in spite of the gentlemen's warning them of the danger of welcoming 'Love.'

After every one had admired him and caressed him, and the sweet-tempered pet had laughed, crowed, and gone through his limited vocabulary, he fell suddenly asleep in the arms of a fat ambassador; and a young *attaché*, sighing, said: "*Qui voudra, éveiller l'amour dans le sein de Vénus.*"

In this sweet sleep the lovely boy was carried up to his cot, and robbed of wings, quiver, and spangled tunic, and wreath of roses, without opening the azure eyes weighed with the deep and balmy sleep of infancy.

Although there was a brilliant display of beauty at this ball—beauty enhanced by the most brilliant, becoming, and tasteful costumes, yet it seemed the universal opinion that no one at all approached in loveliness the Queen of the fête, the enchanting Amy Robsart. Sir Walter himself would have been satisfied with so fair, so graceful, and so touching an incarnation of his bewitching conception: the same *naïve* tenderness, the same sweet mixture of the bloom of

*girlhood*, and the dignity of youthful matronage; the same sportive grace and arch softness, which, on the evening when, at Cumnor Hall, poor, poor Amy is first introduced to her lordly bridegroom, makes the poet exclaim, "you might have sought earth and sea without finding any thing half so lovely!"

Fitzopal made a handsome and graceful Leicester, and did not attempt to disguise the admiration he felt for his cousin. Nor did she sufficiently repress her almost girlish pleasure in his flattery, and pride in his devotion.

Major Smiley, as Tressilian, hovered ever near them; his sad-colored garb in unison with his thoughts, and his slouched Spanish hat and feather shading features distorted by envy, jealousy, and revenge.

Sir Noah every now and then awoke from a geological reverie, to gaze with wonder and love on his enchanting wife; and Grumbleby, at his elbow, took care to embitter the old man's pride

and joy, by pointing out the devotion of Fitzsop,<sup>o</sup> and the evident satisfaction of Ada.

After Devereux Spight had a little eased his mind of its overflowing venom, by the lampoon he had written, he asked 'Inez' to dance with him; and though she neither liked his costume nor his expression of countenance, she was too good-natured to refuse.

"I have learnt," she said to him playfully, "that yon Yorkshire Squire, who keeps so close to old Sir Noab, and who seems so angry with sweet Amy Robsart and her partner, is no less a person than Mr. Grumbleby—one of my three prescribed suitors; and I have ascertained besides, that he is now in London for the purpose of pushing his fortunes with "the heiress."

"Capital!" said Devereux Spight; "I owe that old fellow a grudge, for he not only laughed as I passed, and called me 'Cupid done brown,' but he trod with his huge splay foot on mine in this light buskin. Sweet sybil!" he said to Inez, "can you spare from your train of ad-

mirers, such a substantial suitor? If so, and you are as fond of a good joke as those frolic eyes and lips proclaim you—oh I have such a capital piece of fun in my head!”

“Oh! do tell me—I’m sure to delight in it!”

“Well, then, you wish well to Thalia Evergreen?”

“Decidedly.”

“You would be glad to see her well married!”

“Of course.”

“You would be sorry when her sister becomes the “Bride of her Adolphus,” that poor Thalia should be left to buffet alone with that fate they have so long and bravely done battle with together!”

“I should indeed. I have, remember, my own opinion as to Captain Fitzopal’s devotion to Miss Evergreen, my own suspicions; but, even if just, he deserves his doom; and if, as I anticipate, you have a somewhat similar scheme for Thalia, I shall be as glad to be rid of the suitor, as she would to be his bride!”



"Sweet gipsy!" said Spight, "well do those intelligent eyes reveal the genius which distinguishes you. What think you then? I have ascertained that this Grumbleby is a prating, prating, would-be philosopher—wisdom ever in his words, and folly in his deeds. Say, sweet sybil! shall we make him wed poor Thalia Evergreen, under the notion that *she* is Clementina Castleton—*alias* two hundred thousand pounds!"

"Oh yes! oh yes!" said Inez, clasping her hands; "he is very rich; poor Thalia would be so well off, and if he would marry her for her money, he deserves to be taken in."

"Well, then, sweet gipsy! do you take an opportunity of telling his fortune; give him to understand that he is soon to wed an heiress from the East—tell him in confidence he has two rivals—describe the Lady a little, and leave the rest to me. In his character of magistrate, I hear he has all gipseys taken up, but he will not be at all under the influence of those fortune-telling

eyes, nor at all the less disposed to believe your prophecy—for all men are superstitious about their own fates.”

So saying, as the dance concluded, they separated, and Inez watched her opportunity for approaching Grumbleby.

Meanwhile, intoxicated by universal homage, and her heart engrossed by her cousin's devotion, Ada had taken little or no notice of Major Smiley. She had promised Fitzopal to dance with him a *valse à deux temps*, a polka, a quadrille, and a galop in succession; and after those four dances, she had listlessly engaged to waltz with Major Smiley. To this waltz he had looked forward with the impatience of a man passionately in love; but in the meantime, forgetting all about both it and him, Ada and her cousin, who thought the characters they had assumed were a sufficient excuse for dancing so much together, ordered the musicians to strike up a mazurka, and prepared to stand up together.

Major Smiley came forward.

"I think," he said; (but though he forced a smile, he was very pale; and spite of himself, his lip quivered); "I think the lovely Amy promised her poor Tressilian that this should be a waltz, and that she would dance it with him; he has looked forward to it all the evening."

"Oh, dear! I quite forgot," said Ada. "But never mind, Tressilian, let me dance the mazurka now, and the next shall be your waltz. It can make no difference—so do forgive me, and let me off this time!"

And she gaily joined the mazurka with her cousin.

"It can make no difference!" said Tressilian between the teeth he ground together in his wrath, while a choking sensation, like a spasm, was in his throat, and large tears of jealous anguish filled his eyes. "It can make no difference; but forgive you, Ada! and let you off this once! No, by every fiend in hell, and every kindred demon in my breast, that will I not. Ah! it was not thus you looked at me and spoke to me,

when I brought you hope and comfort in your wild despair. You were humble then, Ada ! almost imploring ; you thought not then of that gay popinjay of a Fitzopal ; to save your child one pang, I could have made you swear never to see his most accursed face again. And I will see thee meek and tearful, and full of self-reproach again. I never will forgive thee, woman—never let thee off !” Confirming this bitter resolution with an inward oath, too horrible to record, Major Smiley sate down and watched the gay mazurka, in which Ada and Fitzopal were figuring to the delight of their own hearts, and that of all the scandal-mongers present.

Poor Sir Noah, incited by Grumbleby, watched them for the first time with an uneasiness, that occasionally put out of his head, a new discovery he was making relative to stratified rocks. Spight noted all, as so much stock in trade for the “Hornet.”

Fitzopal, more and more enamoured, and his opinion of women influenced, and his principles

perverted, by the heartless scoffing and mundane calculations of his intimate adviser Smiley, was beginning to indulge hopes that were insults to the pure though thoughtless creature at his side. And Ada alone, in the perfect self-reliance of a nature innocent and unsuspicious of evil, met her cousin's gaze with smiles and blushes, perfectly unaware that every one of those smiles and blushes was construed by the men of the world around her (aye, and by its hardened women too) into a wrong to Sir Noah; and worse still, that even in her cousin's own breast, they raised emotions she would have thought it guilt, either in him to feel, or in herself to awaken.

"You see, Fanny!" said the still handsome but haughty Lady Revel, gorgeous in her Elizabethan costume, gazing into a pier-glass near which she sate, and settling her ruff and her diamond stomacher—"you see, Fanny, the entire devotion of Fitzopel to your sister Lady Fathom; as far as he is concerned, our visit here is a failure."

Fanny, who was fond of Adolphus, said nothing.

"But I have ascertained beyond a doubt," added Lady Revel, looking over her shoulder into the glass, so as to get a view of her head-dress, *en profile*, "that Mr. Grumbleby has no intention whatever of leaving his fine fortune to Adolphus ; therefore Adolphus would be no catch, Fanny, and is no loss ; but it seems Mr. Grumbleby, from all I hear, means to avail himself of the chance thrown in his way by the absurd will of that old madman Castleton, and to push his fortunes with the heiress. Now, listen, Fanny—and don't gaze after your cousin in that way ; what a fool you must be ! Does not all this wealth and popularity, this splendid 'position' of your sister's, excite any emulation in your breast ? I do believe a similar destiny awaits you. I saw Grumbleby looking at you with admiration."

"Old Grumbleby, mamma ! why he is Adolphus's uncle, and almost a sort of uncle of ours."

“He is no relation whatever of ours. Adolphus and yourselves are only second cousins, and as Grumbleby is only Adolphus’s uncle by his sister’s marriage with your father’s first cousin, the connexion amounts to nothing. Your brother, fool that he is! will of course come from his hiding-place when he hears of his chance of the heiress. I mean to concoct an advertisement to be put in all the papers, and which will enlighten him without at all attracting public attention. I shall then take good care to let Miss Castleton (as soon as she announces her arrival) know of Fitzopal’s devotion to your sister, and I think, if she has any spirit, that knowing that, and you having so played your cards as to have secured Grumbleby, Miss Castleton cannot hesitate between such a fine young man as Wildair, and a single life. Nor can I have given birth to such a total fool as Wildair will prove, if he does not secure the prize. And now all you have to do, Fanny, is to flatter up Mr. Grumbleby, who though very wise in maxim, is, I hear a very vain

and simple person in conduct ; blind, credulous, and unsuspecting as Sir Noah, but ten times as vain and fifty times as conceited. However, as mother or daughter, I would much rather have to manage a vain man ; there is something to work upon. There, be a good girl, and play your cards well, and as Mrs. Grumbleby, you may rival your sister in style—take the mansion next door, that was Lord Cambermere's, and perhaps, having the charm of novelty, win your handsome Cousin Adolphus to be your cavalier instead of Ada's ! There, Grumbleby is coming this way ; I shall vacate my chair—beckon to him—oldish men require a good deal of coaxing.”

So saying, Lady Revel sailed away to a card table, and Fanny beckoned Grumbleby to her side, but with so little spirit, and so purely in obedience to a mother she dreaded, that though the old spectacled beau was coming up to her, he was easily diverted from his purpose, when the arch Inez insisted on examining his hand, and telling his fortune.



This Inez did with so much tact and grace, such adroit flattery, such arch glances, and such a musical voice, that the sage Grumbleby listened delighted. Inez had drawn him into a corner, where they sate down, and where, when she had given him hints enough to bewilder his old head, she beckoned Devereux Spight to come and complete her work.

"Will you let me introduce," she said, with winning kindness, "to a very dear old friend of mine, and one who is also intimate with the lady of your love. We both wish her well—both would regret to see her thrown away on a *roué* Captain, or a spendthrift Oxonian. Mr. Grumbleby! Mr. Devereux!"

The gentlemen bowed, spoke of the weather, the ministers, the ball, and then Inez glided away.

When she was gone, Grumbleby burst out into raptures about her, and Devereux Spight *confided* to him that she was the intimate friend and adviser of one, who at present occupied many

thoughts and much public attention—the great heiress, Miss Castleton.

Quite off his guard, Grumbleby revealed to Devereux Spight his own interest in that lady; and the sly little Devereux, squeezing his hand, led him into a deserted tea-room.

He bound him, by every promise he could devise, to secrecy—gave him to understand that the heiress was at that very ball, under the name of Miss Thalia Evergreen—and offered to introduce him!

After this, Grumbleby's persevering attentions quite defeated those of the young Count Von-flitter. Spight found an opportunity to give Thalia a hint of her chance. She made herself very agreeable to Grumbleby, who gazed at her plump form, and the sandy locks, which he easily believed were gold, (for were they not the heiress's?) and Spight and the mischievous Inez laughed together at the success of their plot; Inez with thoughtless mirth to see so wily an old trout caught by so palpable a bait, and Spight

with an inward feeling of venom against Grumbleby, and all people better off and more respectable than himself—with a triumphant delight too in his own powers of manœuvering, and with the one redeeming point, that he was glad his own old friend, and one whose father too had been kind to Spight's mother, should have a chance of exchanging the sweat of the brain for the indolent affluence of Grumbleby Park !

The dance to which Major Smiley had so looked forward came, and Ada took his arm with a listless unconsciousness, more enraging to him than positive aversion would have been. He bore her light form through the waltz—he felt her supple and slender waist in his arms—her breath was on his cheek—her long gold curls were wafted to his shoulder—and all this, which was delirious joy to him, was nothing to her !

Adolphus formed one of the ring of admirers, who pressed around to gaze on the beautiful Amy ; and though she took no notice of her partner, she forgot not to smile whenever

her cousin's eyes met hers! But before the dance concluded, a sign from Spight had summoned Adolphus away. Ada looked round in disappointment—a disappointment which Smiley read in the blank that stole over her bright face—in the listless step which now succeeded the sylph-like effort to shine—and in the languid voice with which she said: “I think that will do, Major—I feel very tired!”

Major Smiley, biting his lip, and cursing her in his heart, led her to a chair, and stood at some little distance from her. While, lost in thought, Ada fanned herself, a page brought her a little note on a silver salver. Major Smiley watched her as she read, start, change from red to pale and pale to red—perceived her eyes fill with tears—her lip tremble, and her bosom heave.

No one else noted all this, for a popular and inimitable singer was delighting the gay crowd with a new song. Major Smiley appeared to be intent, like the rest, on the singer, but he did not let one of Ada's movements escape him.

Presently, and thinking herself quite unobserved, Ada stole out of the room, passed through the suit of *saloons*, now deserted for the singer, and reached a little ante-room, which led by a flight of steps into a conservatory, and thence to the garden. In this room were cloaks and shawls piled up. Ada took one, threw it over her head and round her form, and with a beating heart, she hurried into the garden. She sped across the velvet sod like a frightened fawn, reached a little summer-house at the end of the garden, and which looked out upon an unfinished street. She darted up-stairs, entered the little room, half filled with plants, and lighted only by the stars (for the moon was behind a cloud), and with a scream of joy perceiving the dark outline of a man wrapped in a large cloak—Ada was clasped to the heart of—her brother Wildair Revel.

How fondly they embraced ! how affectionately she clung to him ! how proudly he drew her on to the balcony, to gaze by the moonlight on her

beauty—how she tried to force on him her purse, her jewels—and how she knelt to him to let her be the happy means of delivering him from all his difficulties. But in vain; he would take nothing but her embrace, and then he compelled her to return to her guests, promising her, if she did so, he would soon return to her for ever. And Ada, fearing from his manner that he had some reason for dreading detection, clasped him fondly to her breast, and hurried away.

But she had been followed and watched by one who had only overtaken her in time to see that ardent embrace, and to hear her parting words of love and promise. Hidden behind the door, Major Smiley, without a doubt on his own mind that the person she had met was Fitzopal, saw her glide noiselessly away, and saw too, leaning over the low balcony, the object of a jealous loathing, new to the bad heart of the Calculator. "I might win her yet," he thought, "but for him! how she clung to him, how she blest him!"

The spirit of Cain awoke in the breast of the bold, bad man ; for once he forgot to calculate. Unluckily, in his disguise of Tressilian, he wore a dagger in his belt. He darted forward as Wildair leant against a pillar of the balcony ; maddened by jealousy, he stabbed him in the back, and losing his balance, Wildair fell heavily into the street below.

The wretch paused not to see what was become of his victim ; but he hurried back to the festive scene, aware, now it was too late, of the danger and the folly of the first act of his life he had done without calculation. He was startled when he reached the ante-room, at the ghastly expression of his face, and knowing the house well, he sought and found a dressing-room, where he bathed his face in cold water, re-adjusted his hair and dress, and tried to recover his composure. He then repaired to a refreshment room, where he drank off several glasses of champagne in rapid succession, and where he succeeded by this means in bringing back the colour to his face,

and some degree of warmth and nerve to his limbs. He then returned to the ball-room, where, to his ineffable surprise, the first object he saw was Ada, dancing a minuet with Adolphus Fitzsopal, this dance having been requested by some who knew that Lady Fathom was remarkable for dancing it with peculiar grace.

As Major Smiley gazed on the graceful pair, a cold sweat came out upon his face and hands—as though he had seen a spectre ; but the relief from the sudden sense of crime was so great that he had only time to hurry back into the deserted ante-room, before his tears gushed forth, and the hard Calculator wept like a girl. “The thrust,” he said to himself, “must only have gashed his cloak, and the height of the balcony was a mere bound for the agile boy. But, thank heaven ! it is so. I acted without thought, without calculation, for the first time and the last ; but though I rejoice he has escaped, I know now your secret, Ada ! I know why the clod of the valley is not more indifferent to you than I am. Trust to fair



seeming now! Why even I, sceptic as I am and well may be on such points, I would have pledged my life, that as yet Ada was innocent as Janet when first I knew her! But 'tis well; on her shall the punishment fall. She shall weep and kneel to me yet; lovely as she is in her pride and her pomp, she is lovelier in the agony and the tears from which I rescued her once. She little thinks how soon she is to know them again."

Major Smiley returned to the ball-room and joined gaily in a country dance, in which Grumbleby and Thalia Evergreen were outdoing all the rest.

"So you have let that great fat coarse vulgarian—I know not her name—carry off your intended prize," said Lady Revel to Fanny, who sate partnerless, her bosom heaving and her eyes full of tears—the bitter tears of a girl who feels her first ball has been a failure.

"I couldn't help it, Mamma," she faltered; I beckoned to him to come as you bade me."

Lady Revel looked at poor Fanny with supreme contempt.

“Well, for heaven’s sake, don’t cry. I declare you’ve got a red nose; no wonder you get no partners. You’ll be obliged to go out as a governess, or a companion; this is your only chance, for Revel Hall must be given up. I shall invite myself to stay with Ada, and you must provide for yourself.”

At this moment the young Count Vonfitter, who rather admired Fanny, and pitied her for being so deserted, came up, and asked her to dance. He requesting this honour in spite of the fat Baron Vonherz, who had ascertained *qu’elle n’avait pas le sou*, and Fanny accepting, in defiance of Lady Revel, who whispered to her as the handsome young Count drew near: “There, don’t make matters worse by dancing with one of those foreign paupers!”

But Fanny thought nothing could be worse than this tête-a-tête with her cross, sarcastic mother.

Fanny had one thousand pounds left her by her godmother, and which Sir Wildair and Lady Revel meant to get possession of as soon as Fanny was of age. It was a miserable trifle, and never mentioned to her. It was not worth mentioning; but she knew it for all that, from an old nurse, who thought it a 'pratty little fortun.'

The Count Vonflitter had sixty pounds a year, as a sort of under secretary to an under secretary to an *attaché* to an embassy. They fell in love, and—but we anticipate—the ball ended gaily for Fanny; the Count had such fine eyes, and had said such things, Fanny went to her room in a sort of fairy dream.

Sir Noah retired a little uneasy; Lady Fathom intoxicated with success; her heart in a flutter of delight and vanity she cared not to analyze; her mind at ease about her beloved brother, whom after years of longing and alarm she had clasped to her heart; and feeling perhaps a little too elated in her cousin's devotion, a little too conscious of the pressure of his hand at parting, and the melancholy devotion of his gaze.

But for all that, full of self-reliance, Ada tripped gaily to her dressing-room, and delighted with the soft and brilliant effect of her beauty, protracted for longer than usual the task of disrobing.

Having at last dismissed her maid, Ada took her candle to repair as usual to the nursery, to embrace her darling boy before retiring for the night.

She entered noiselessly, not to disturb him. Janet was at Turnham Green, but his nurse slept in a bed, to the side of which his cot was drawn.

Slowly Ada withdrew the muslin curtain—the cot was vacant!

“Nurse! nurse!” cried Ada, “where is the child?”

The nurse, bewildered, sat up in bed, rubbed her eyes, stared, and said: “Why, in his cot, my lady. Ruth and I put him to bed ourselves.”

“Ruth! Ruth!” shrieked Lady Fathom. Ruth slept in an inner room.

Ruth sprang out of bed.

"Where is little Noah? You know your taking him into your bed is against orders!"

"I've never taken him, my lady. Mrs. West and I put him to bed as usual in his cot!"

"Great God!" cried Ada, growing ghastly pale, "where can he be?"

Violently she rang the bell. All the servants, who were still about putting away the plate, the supper, &c. &c., rushed upstairs. None knew anything of the child!

"He must have been stolen away in his sleep, while we were at supper," said Ruth, sobbing.

A wild unearthly shriek awoke Sir Noah and Lady Revel out of their first sleep. Fanny was musing over a rose-bud, but she rushed upstairs at the sound.

That horrid shriek was poor Ada's. It seemed certain to her, her child was gone. When her husband, her mother, and sister rushed upstairs, they found her lifeless on the nursery floor!

## CHAPTER XVIII.

The guests had not departed till past five in the morning, and therefore, though the shutters were closed, and the lamps still burned, it was broad daylight without when the wretched mother discovered the loss of her child. On recovering from the deadly swoon into which she had fallen, a passionate and hysterical burst of tears came to her aid ; and after this relief to her bursting heart, Ada began to consider what was best to be done. Sir Noah, who dearly loved his boy, was weeping in helpless anguish. Lady Revel, pretending a nervous attack from the shock and

alarm she had received, had retired to her bed; but Fanny had a heart, and she would not leave her sister in this torturing suspense and horrible alarm.

Perceiving Sir Noah to be perfectly helpless, and more ignorant than themselves what course to pursue, Fanny asked Ada if she knew no gentleman, a man of sense and of the world, who could advise her in this horrible case?

"Major Smiley!" cried Ada, starting to her feet, "he saved my boy once before; he will do his best to help us. Fanny, come with me. Ruth, run to the nearest stand for a coach!"

"But we must change our dresses, Ada!" said Fanny, who though deeply grieved and much alarmed, was not a mother.

"No! no!" shrieked Ada. "West! bring bonnets and cloaks—every moment is precious." And she wrung her hands.

Fanny was in her fancy costume, the puritan garb of Janet Foster. Ada was partly disrobed; but her hair, which, in the character of Amy

Robsart, she had worn curled on her shoulders, still hung in a shower of golden ringlets, and a white wrapper she had thrown on before going to the nursery.

There would have been ample time, while Ruth fetched the coach, for the sisters to make a suitable toilette ; but Ada remained wringing her hands and wildly weeping, and would not let Fanny leave her for a moment. West, the head nurse, brought the sisters their close bonnets and travelling cloaks, and offered to attend them ; but Ada preferred leaving her at home to consult with Sir Noah what should be done.

And rushing down stairs, followed by Fanny, who could scarcely keep pace with her, they drove off in the hackney-coach for Major Smiley's lodgings in Pall Mall.

By this time it was eight o'clock in the morning ; and carts were coming in from the country, and milk-men and other itinerant salesmen were filling the air with their cries ; housemaids were scrubbing door-steps, and cooks in areas were



coquetting with policemen. Whether or not it was possible that at this early hour the Major should have expected a visitor, we know not ; but his sitting-room was in exquisite order ; windows open admitted the fresh breeze of morning, passing through rose and orange trees in each recess, and over boxes of mignonette. An elegant and most tempting breakfast was on the table ; a book Ada had lent Major Smiley, was open at a poem she had praised, and a bouquet she had missed the night before, was in a glass near his seat.

Ada sank into an arm-chair ; she untied her bonnet, and loosened her large cloak ; both fell off, and as Major Smiley entered, he for a moment did not perceive Janet, who was standing at a window. All he saw was Ada, white as marble, her eyes half closed, her long gold hair hanging in profuse ringlets round her form, and attired only in a wrapper of white muslin, edged with lace, and fastened with rose-coloured knots ; but which did not conceal the gasping of her

snowy bosom, and floating aside, showed her delicate foot and ankle in the pearl-embroidered slipper and silk stocking in which she had personated 'Amy Robsart.'

For a moment, one moment only, a fiendish smile of triumph lighted the handsome face of Gaspar Smiley, as he murmured between his closed teeth, "That is as it should be;" but the next, Fanny coming forward, he assumed an air of respectful and anxious surprise; and holding out his hand, asked what had happened.

Fanny tried to explain, but in doing so, burst into tears. Ada rising, half fainting, from her arm-chair, held out both her hands to Gaspar, and exclaiming, "Oh, Major Smiley! my boy, my poor boy! save him again! restore him to me again as you did before, and I will bless you!"

So saying, partly from physical weakness, partly from temporary excitement, Ada fell on her knees before the Calculator.

"Oh Ada!" he cried, "dearest, best! or

rather, Lady Fathom, sweet afflicted lady! how can I serve you? what can I do to comfort you?"

He tried to raise Ada, who knelt before him, burying her face in her hands, and sobbing in unutterable anguish. Major Smiley certainly seemed to be endeavouring to raise the exquisite form before him, but a nice observer would have discovered that he was more bent on gazing upon her beauty, and gloating over her abject and dependent misery, than on raising or supporting her.

At length, however, Fanny recovered composure sufficient to tell her story; and at its climax, Ada uttered a wild shriek and fell heavily forward on Major Smiley's arm. Then did he lift her from the floor, and carry her, (not to a couch close by,) but to a sofa, at the further end of the large room; observing to Fanny, that the air from the window would revive her, but in reality to prolong for himself the delight of folding in his arms, and pressing to his beating,

plotting heart, the beautiful though cold and unconscious form of the only woman he had ever loved with all the passionate energy of his bad but ardent nature. With what tenderness did this strange and plotting man bend over the lifeless being before him; who, though a wife and a mother, looked, in that simple drapery and with those unbound tresses of gold, in the first season of youth. Fanny thought, as she looked at them, that she had seldom seen a more striking and interesting picture.

"Strange," thought the Calculator, as he bent over her, "that being who looks almost child-like in her innocence and purity, should yet be capable of carrying on the deep and dark intrigue I detected; but for that, I could find it in my heart to spare her this terrible anguish; but no, no, he will console her; in his embrace she will forget her child, and become independent of me, after this first shock is over. Oh, I know women too well to be easily moved to pity; but for that knowledge, the angelic purity of that face would

almost make me doubt the evidence of my own senses."

Major Smiley, early as was the hour, and late as he must have reached his home, had no air of disorder or of hurry in his morning toilet. Fresh and fragrant from a bath, shaven with care, save where his beautifully kept whiskers and moustachios gave a becoming finish to his handsome face; he was very pale, but it was not the sickly pallor of dissipation; it was the transparent white of mental emotion. An Apollo cap of purple velvet worked in gold covered part of his head, and the thick clusters of his closely curling hair of palest gold, shone in the morning sun. His form was enveloped in a very costly tartar dressing gown of purple damask satin, and being, as we have said, tall but somewhat embonpoint, this rich and ample garment became him far more than any other. Fanny thought she had never seen a handsomer man, and but for the lively impression made on her young heart so recently by Count Vonfitter, she would probably have

fallen deeply in love with the Calculator—a worse fate still, since Vonfitter was a kind, open, straightforward fellow, and had a heart to exchange for hers; while Major Smiley had now no thought or feeling but for Ada; and even had he been fancy-free, his light love would have been ruin.

After administering the usual restoratives, and watching her with the most devoted care for some time, Ada slowly recovered. And in spite of all Major Smiley's offers of going alone in search of her lost child, she insisted on accompanying him to the different police-offices, and wherever he seemed to think there was a chance of any good result.

As this active pursuit seemed most likely to prevent delirium or insensibility, the Major consented, and the trio spent a great part of the day in driving about from one place to another, and setting all sorts of emissaries on the watch for and in search of little Noah.

## CHAPTER XIX.

The difficulties of obtaining any information about the lost child, were of course very much increased by the confusion, the tumult, and the crowd which had been caused by the fancy-ball on the night of his abduction.

All sorts of odd figures, with their valets or ladies' maids, carrying bundles or articles necessary to the completion of their costumes and characters, had been coming and going for so many hours, that any one might have removed little Noah under a cloak or even in a hamper

without exciting any surprise, or provoking any inquiry.

Every attempt at investigating the conflicting reports of different people, who had watched the coming and going of the guests, only served to bewilder and to mystify, and seemed to convince the wretched parents, of the utter hopelessness of obtaining any clue to this terrible mystery.

After rushing wildly about the whole day with her sister and Major Smiley, Ada was eager to get home, fancying some tidings might there have been received of her lost darling. Home they accordingly drove; Ada so weak from agitation and alarm, that but for the support of Major Smiley's strong arm round her slight waist, she would have sunk among the straw at the bottom of the coach.

Indeed, by the time they reached Belgrave Square, Ada's eyes were closed, the long wet lashes rested on a cheek whose deadly pallor announced another swoon, and that cold wet cheek was pillowed on a breast which heaved



with a cruel love, a hyena gladness, and a villain exultation.

When the hackney coach stopped at the Fathoms' house, Captain Fitzopal, who loved Ada too passionately not to feel much distress and alarm on her account, rushed out of the boudoir where he had been watching for hours, and, pale and agitated, assisted Major Smiley to carry the bereaved young mother into the boudoir, and to place her on a couch.

Here a new calamity awaited the unfortunate Ada; so true is it, that misfortunes love a crowd. Poor Sir Noah, in his blind anxiety to go in quest of Ada, had slipped down several steps, fancying he was about to walk on level ground; the result had been a dreadful fall, and several very severe contusions. At first it was feared his leg was broken; but the surgeon who had been called in, ascertained he was suffering only from a very severe and painful sprain, which however confined him to his bed, and probably would do so for many days; and there he was

at present handed over to the tender mercies of Grumbleby.

Another curious incident had been elicited by the inquiries set on foot : it appeared that in the unfinished street, on which part of Sir Noah's garden and summer-house looked, a policeman, going his rounds, had found a handkerchief, a glove, and a pool of blood ; and a few doors further off, a young man wrapped in a large military cloak, who had been severely wounded in the back, and who was, when found by the policeman, in a state of insensibility—that on searching his pockets, a card, with the name of “ Mr. Luckless, 13, Cirencester Place, Gower Street,” had been found on him ; but as he was too weak to be conveyed to such a distance, he had been carried to the Grosvenor Arms, Belgrave Street, where he lay with but little hopes of his recovery. Robbery, it was added, did not seem to have been the object of the base assassin who had stabbed him in the back, as in his pockets were found a purse containing several sovereigns,

and a good deal of silver, and a pocket-book, in which was a ten-pound note. An eminent surgeon in the neighbourhood was in attendance on him, and the Landlord of the Grosvenor Arms had shewn him every possible attention. On two or three occasions he had recovered sufficiently to speak coherently, but either could not or would not throw any light on the mystery of this brutal and cowardly outrage.

These details were repeated to Major Smiley by Captain Fitzsop, who had himself heard them from the policeman, and by night they had found their way into the evening papers, and were even bellowed about the streets by the cries of "horrid murders and last dying speeches and confessions." Major Smiley grew ghastly pale as he listened to these details. He felt a sort of conviction that this must have been the very man whom, in a transport of mad and blind jealousy, he had mistaken for Adolphus. But who then was he? Had Ada some other and more disreputable *liaison* still? Had he not seen her offer this

man her purse, her jewels? Seen her in his embrace, and heard their vows of love?

As he thought of all this, his colour returned, and he felt more safe; for reason whispered that this man had too good reason to conceal his stolen and illicit interview with Lady Fathom, for him to run any risk of criminating any one by detailing the circumstances of the case.

Janet, it seemed, had returned early in the day from Turnhan Green, having found her own child quite well, and Mrs. Koddle perfectly unaware of the note that had been sent to summon her to it. This therefore must have been part of the vile plot for the abduction of little Noah; the miscreant or miscreants who had carried off the child being evidently determined to send the watchful and affectionate Janet out of their way first. Lady Fathom after some time awoke again to all the miseries of her situation, and poor Janet, weeping and pale, exhausted every topic of hope or comfort.

After a consultation with Sir Noah, it was

agreed to offer a reward of five thousand pounds and perfect safety to any one who would restore the child uninjured in the course of the week; and after this had been done, Lady Fathom seemed a little more disposed to listen to the suggestions of hope, and a little more able to collect her thoughts, and find in solitary and earnest prayer, the only real comfort of misery like hers.

With regard to Adolphus, he once again was linked in her thoughts with a frivolous vanity and an idle dissipation, which now in her rigid self-examination she condemned and loathed; and awakened conscience, reminding her of the engrossing pleasure and triumph she had felt in his devotion, and the something very like tenderness it had awakened in her—she, the wife of another! a horrible dread that this, her unbearable anguish might be inflicted in retribution, made her shudder at the very thought of her cousin, the sight of his face, the sound of his voice.

Things were in this miserable state, when Lady Revel sent for Fanny into her own room. Fanny was surprised to see her mother up and arrayed for travelling, and her maid completing the packing of her boxes.

Lady Revel, putting her hand to her head, in token of severe pain, then said: "You have put me to great inconvenience, Fanny, by staying out all day—I consider it very selfish and inconsiderate."

"But, Mamma, I was with poor Ada!"

"Ada has a husband, and plenty of friends here—I have no one but you!"

"But you, Mamma, you are not in the most horrible of mental anguish; you are not at one moment almost delirious with terror, and the next swooning with exhaustion."

"No, because I have learnt to control my emotions—to sacrifice myself for others; not, like a spoilt child, to make everybody miserable because I am so. I feel all this perhaps as acutely as Lady Fathom, but I do not upset a

whole establishment by my egotistical and selfish insanity."

"Oh, Mamma! you have no idea of Ada's state of mind! do come and see her! these few hours of unspeakable misery seem to have done the work of years—so ghastly pale—such dark circles round her eyes—such blisters on her cheeks—her lips so parched and blue—her eyes so wild and watchful—her hair all dishevelled, as when she ran up to see her darling before she put it up for the night—still in the wrapper she had on then, and seemingly quite unconscious of her neglected dress! Oh, if you were to see her, it would almost break your heart!

"A consummation most devoutly to be wished, no doubt!" said Lady Revel. "I assure you, I am quite uncomfortable enough as it is. Tarletan, you may go and get on your own things. (Tarletan, the maid, left the room). You know, Fanny, with what difficulty I, for your sake, obtained from your father the money for this visit to London; you know the load of debt I have

incurred to enable us both to make a suitable appearance; and you must see that no possible good result can arise in this house now, from all this trouble, risk, and expense.

Not only has the child been stolen, as if on purpose to annoy me, and defeat my plans; but that blind old idiotic driveller, Sir Noah, has, I believe, broken one of his crooked old legs; and that old ass of a Grumbleby has fallen in love with that coarse blowy Diana of last night. Now all this is a great deal too much for my nerves; people of no feeling can do very well in a house of mourning—I cannot—it will be my death. With the money raised for this visit, I propose staying a few weeks at Lady Adair's; she pressed me to do so last night, and as her eldest son is at home, I think it might answer; so now, get ready, and tell Ada I was too ill to trust myself to see her, and thought that at such a time it would be a relief to her to have her house free from guests.

“Oh, yes, mamma,” said Fanny, half weeping,



"any other guests of course, but not her own mother!"

"You know, Fanny, that I never lend myself to romantic humbug; I am her mother, and, as such, entitled to every attention and respect (though I have been alone in this room all day); but I am neither a nurse nor a toady; she has not even consulted me about the best course to pursue. I wish her well, and hope the boy will be found; but I can do no good by moping here. Do you choose to come with me?"

"I cannot, mamma," said Fanny, weeping wildly and wringing her hands; do, do let me stay with Ada, mamma, at least till the child is found, or she is a little more reconciled to his loss! do, mamma!"

And Fanny fell on her knees, and caught hold of her mother's satin dress!

"Rise, Fanny, I beg," said Lady Revel, smoothing the rumpled satin; "all these violent emotions are so very vulgar, so plebeian, you must have inherited them from your father, both you

and Ada! You never saw anything of the kind in me, I am sure. You need not weep and sob like a waiting maid dismissed without a character; I am very willing to leave you here; I want no daughter with red eyes and swollen nose with me; I assure you. Give my message to Ada! and tell her I have, as usual, sacrificed myself to leave you to comfort her, and that I shall be glad of any tidings of her child at Lady Adair's, Adair House, Twickenham. Now ring for Tarletan; and stay, as you will be in the house with Mr. Grumbleby, I shall think you a very unattractive person indeed, if you do not bring him and his five thousand a year to your feet!"

"Good-bye, dear Mamma," said Fanny, "and thank you for letting me stay!"

"Good-bye, Fanny," said the stately Lady Revel, lowering a thick veil, and putting a handkerchief to her eyes as she went down-stairs; "and do act in a manner worthy of my daughter!"

Lady Revel being safely off, Fanny flew to her sister, whom she found, after long and fervent prayer, a little less desolate, and more reasonable.

Fanny tried to make the best she could of her mother's heartless conduct and cold message; but Ada stopped her, saying, with a sickly smile: "No matter, Fanny dear! she is our mother, and so we will not dwell on this subject. I know all about it, Fanny; three years have not driven from my mind the impressions of a life; but, oh Fanny! Fanny! what is a mother spared, who is not gifted or cursed with those acute maternal sensibilities, that ineffable affection, that passionate yearning, which, where it exists, is, I believe, the most violent feeling of which our nature is capable! I am too much its victim not to be glad mamma is so happily free from its dreadful power. She loses many pleasures, Fanny, but oh what anguish she escapes!"

And as she spoke, the thought of her own terrible bereavement rushed back in all its hor-

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rors on her mind; vivid Fancy conjured up one terrible picture after another; and a violent fit of hysterics compelled Fanny to ring for immediate assistance.

## CHAPTER XIX.

The account of the attempted assassination of poor Luckless found its way into all the papers, and caught the eye of one who had begun to love him with that wild romantic love, which made every trifle connected with him, of importance, and of course invested these terrible details with unspeakable horror.

Luckily the heiress was alone in her dressing-room with Rose Pink, when first the dreadful tidings caught her eye. Rose was at once brushing her mistress's black hair, and admiring her own chesnut corkscrews in the glass. She was

alarmed when, after a faint shriek, Inez sank heavily back in her chair, pale as death and moaning piteously. Rose Pink, who, from many little symptoms, had suspected the state of her lady's heart, and who had had herself of late several hysterics and one *feint* to bring Stubbs to the point, had too much tact to summon the Evergreens. She wished to be her lady's sole confidante. She had seen in plays, and read in books, of purses of untold gold, valuable rings, fine compliments, and flattering caresses, lavished by generous aspirants of the lady, on the lady's own woman; and though she feared Mr. Luckless, whom she remembered as the 'Back Garret' at Evergreen House, was not exactly in circumstances to purchase her favour with gold or jewels; yet on the stage and in novels, Dukes and Marquises sometimes appeared, in the first acts, in disguises as mean; and Mr. Luckless's air was as noble, and his hand as white as any Lord's. Rose Pink, therefore, administered salvolatile and water, salts, aromatic vinegar, a fan, and fresh air; she then

loosened her lady's stays and laid her on a sofa, and in a short time Inez opened her large black eyes—not with the orthodox inquiry of, "Where am I?" but with a sudden exclamation of, "Oh how weak I am to give way thus, when there is not a moment to be lost!" Pale and trembling, she started to her feet, and began to wind up her long hair herself, while she sent Rose in search of Thalia Evergreen.

Rose Pink (who, during her lady's recovery, had made herself acquainted with the paragraph that had so disturbed her) went with an angry pout, thinking herself a much fitter confidante in such a case than Miss Thalia.

But Inez, thoughtless and impassioned as she certainly was, had by nature a thousand delicate sensibilities and scruples, which Love—as first true love always does—had quickened rather than annulled. Inez felt that in the daring and devoted proof of love she meditated, a young waiting-woman was no protection in her own eyes—no sanction in those of the world. She forgot at

that moment all Thalia's assumption of girlishness to remember her only as a middle-aged woman of irreproachable character, who had been one of the guides and teachers of her youth.

Thalia Evergreen promptly obeyed the heiress's summons. She was herself in high spirits and very gaily drest. Grumbleby had been, for more than an hour, walking up and down Gower Street, and glancing from under his shaggy eyebrows, and through his spectacles, at her whom he believed to possess two hundred thousand charms—besides the bucksome person, the florid complexion, and golden ringlets which he, really purblind as he was, admired.

Thalia started at the white cheeks, the wet eyes, and trembling hands of Inez, and with some natural anxiety, and a good deal of acquired romance, exclaimed: "My Inez! my sweet riend!" and caught her in her arms. The voice of sympathy, coming even from Thalia Evergreen, was too much for poor Inez at such a moment, and she fairly burst into tears. How-



ever, remembering there was no time to be lost, she hastily dried her eyes, and while she made a hurried toilet, she directed Thalia's attention to the fatal paragraph.

"How distressing!" said Thalia, (assuming a grief she did not feel!) though even she was rather shocked at such a horrible catastrophe; "what can be done for the poor fellow?"

"That," said Inez, "we have yet to learn; he is friendless and forlorn to the greatest degree; I do not believe he has one creature to tend him living, or," she added, wringing her hands, and trying to check her sobs, "to receive his last wishes, and his parting breath."

"But what can we do, Inez?" said Thalia, "two young, unmarried, inexperienced women!"

At any other time Inez would have smiled at being thus classed with the overblown Thalia; but now she only said: "Thalia, I am determined to go to him, to see him, to help to restore him, if he is to live; to solace and console him if——" She could not pronounce the horrible

alternative. "I have sent to you, Thalia, in this the bitterest anguish and greatest peril of my life, to ask you to give me the sanction of your presence, your company."

"My dear Inez!" said Thalia, dissuasively, "you know not what you ask. I know you have the purest motives, the best intentions, but man is so vain, and the world is so censorious—and — just at this moment, Inez—I—in short, any step I take is not only likely to be closely watched; but it may affect the future destiny of your poor Thalia."

This time Inez could not restrain a faint smile, for she remembered her idle plot with Devereux Spight relative to Grumbleby, and she saw it had worked rapidly, and that Thalia expected a proposal.

"Well!" said Inez, "I stand alone in the world, my actions are of little importance to any one; as long as I satisfy my own conscience, and the scruples of my own delicacy, I need not immolate a true regard to a false world. Had

you given me the comfort and support of your presence and advice, Thalia, on this dreadful occasion, you would have deeply obliged one who has a long memory even for little kindnesses, and would not easily forget a great benefit; but I wish you not to endanger any prospect for me. I will go; but I will go attended only by Rose Pink; and now all I request of you in this affair is, discretion, nay, a promise of secrecy!"

"Not so! not so! my Inez!" cried Thalia, who after deliberating awhile, did not see that compliance with the heiress's romantic wish could endanger her chance of Grumbleby. "Never shall Friendship ask of Thalia Evergreen a sacrifice she will not make."

Thalia not only saw that it was to her interest to oblige Inez, but she really felt for her distress, and had besides a sort of pleasure in taking an active part in a romantic adventure, something like those she was always spinning out of her excited brain!

"Then you will go with me!" said Inez.

"I will, my love ! but you must give me half an hour to prepare ; a little precaution may save much mischief. Do you, dearest, borrow a dress and bonnet of Rose Pink's, then send her for a coach, and let it be at the back entrance in half an hour. If you have a little time to spare, love, get together a few bottles of scent, some fine handkerchiefs, a little fruit, a fan, and any other comforts, such as woman only thinks of in these cases, and which your poor friend is not likely to be provided with at the 'Grosvenor Arms.'"

Delighted with this suggestion, Inez filled a basket with all the articles named—salts, aromatic vinegar, refreshing perfumes, tamarinds, and some very fine fruit. She then borrowed a plain dress, shawl, apron, and close straw bonnet of Rose Pink, in which she looked the neatest and prettiest little *soubrette* in the world—selected some books of poetry, such as lovers delight in, and sent Rose for the coach.

A little before the expiration of the half-hour, Inez, with the impatience of first love, glided

down-stairs, hastened across the back yard, and sprang into the coach. Fearful of being seen, she drew herself back into the furthest corner, and hid her face in her handkerchief. In a few minutes, she heard Thalia's voice, and looking up, was as much dismayed as surprised to see that extraordinary person spring into the coach, attired as a man !

“Drive on, Coachee !” said Thalia, in a voice as manly as she could well assume. And Inez, afraid of any delay, ventured not to expostulate. But what a ridiculous caricature did Thalia appear. She had arrayed herself in a snuff-coloured suit belonging to Mc. Peevish, who was out for the day, and had appropriated besides, a white hat, a bright green neckcloth, and a cobalt blue cloak of Fitzplagiar's. Her hair, which she generally wore in a ringlet crop, she had gathered completely under the white hat, so that not one iota was visible to soften or to shade her fat and florid countenance. Even Inez, in her distress and alarm, could not look at the little squat,

short, odd-looking nondescript before her, with an air so conceited and even bullying as she had assumed, without a laugh.

But drawing up her collar, and looking very important, Thalia said :

“ By this disguise I, Inez, escape all chance of detection, and I give you, even if you are discovered, the apparent protection of a gentleman’s presence, thus shielding your conduct from any charge of levity, and your person from any impertinence or presumption. This is the only way in which I could reconcile the laws of friendship and feminine delicacy.

Inez thought it was, of all others, the way to outrage them ; but she was in no spirits to argue the point, and indeed as they grew nearer to the part of the town where Luckless lay wounded, perhaps dead, all other feelings were swallowed up in an engrossing terror, which seemed to curdle her heart’s blood, and make her at once dread and long for the moment of arrival at the ‘ Grosvenor Arms’ !

That moment came; the coach stopped at a gorgeous gin-palace, in a half-finished street. Thalia got out of the coach with an important air, gave her stout arm to the sinking Inez, and asked in a blustering voice, whether it was here Mr. Luckless was lying wounded. The important air and strut of this odd-looking creature commanded a prompt attention, which certainly would not have been given to Inez, with her timid voice, her sinking<sup>d</sup> form, and her *grisette* costume. A smart bar-maid, with ringlets half covering her cheeks, and with roses in her cap, answered that "Mr. Luckless was confined to his bed up-stairs, with a wound; but that the doctors began to 'ave some 'ope of 'is recovery."

Upon hearing this, Inez, who before had been obliged to lean on the counter to support herself, began to breathe more freely. The Landlady, a most voluminous and gorgeously dressed woman, about sixty, with rows piled on rows of artificial curls of a dull hay colour, dull, half-closed eyes, a bottle nose of a scarlet, and a double chin of a

purple hue—now in a drowsy kind of voice, the result of being a little overtaken by liquor, told Maria, the smart bar-maid, not to stand palaver-ing, but to show the company up to the gentleman's room. "His father and his sister probable," said the landlady, nodding; "very natooral too—show 'em up, Riars!"

Thalia felt very indignant at this supposition of the landlady's, and less enamoured of her costume than she had been at setting out.

"Lor! to be sure," said the landlady, but loud enough to reach Thalia's ear—"to think that little, fat, hop o' my thumb o' a feller, should be the father of that fine looking chap up-stairs!"

'Riars,' who did not seem troubled with much timidity, tripped up before Thalia and Inez, and threw open the invalid's door, saying to a Mrs. Gamp-like nurse, who sate at a table very busy with her own tea: "The Gentleman's par and sister, Mrs. Tweedle."

Mrs. Tweedle bustled forward, making a great noise in pretending to keep quiet, and speaking



in a hissing whisper, much more irritating to an invalid than any conversation in an ordinary voice. The room was darkened, and the curtains of crimson moreen were drawn round the bed. Added to this, Mrs. Tweedle had a fire, on which her own kettle merrily sate, and sung, and before which her buttered toast and muffins formed a goodly show. It was a warm close summer evening, and the room thus heated, and all air excluded, was enough to give any invalid a fever, if free from it before. But Mrs. Tweedle, like almost all nurses, revelled in heat and dreaded fresh air.

"How is my brother now, nurse?" said Thalia, who could not bear to be thought old enough to be Luckless's father, even by Mrs. Tweedle. "You seem to have everything very comfortable for him," added Thalia, anxious to conciliate the *amour propre* of the nurse, lest her own should receive any further outrage.

"I always does my duty by 'em, poor critturs!" hissed Mrs. Tweedle. "Do your duty,

and trust in Providence—that's my motter; but he's wery violent at times, poor young feller, besides being quite beside himself, and not knowing me no more than a cat; and has a deal of fever, and cries out about the heat, and want hair, as if I'd ever let the cold hair in upon a poor sufferer; no, not if I was like to be suffocated, I wouldn't."

Some impatient moans now issued from the bed; and it was evident the poor patient was tossing about in an agony of restlessness and fever.

"We will watch him a little while, nurse," said Inez, gently sliding a sovereign into the woman's ready hand; "it will be a little relief to you, and he will perhaps be quiet a little, while with us."

"Well, Miss, there ain't no knowing—some's better with their relations, and some's worser; but if you'll watch him a bit, I'll be glad to finish my tea down-stairs, and step home for a few things as I wants. I comed away in sich a hurry,

for I never thinks of myself, when a dear, blessed feller-crittur is in danger."

So saying, Mrs. Tweedle collected on the tray her toast, her muffins, and all her tea equipage, tilted an old black silk bonnet on her bottle nose, and with a low curtsey left the room.

"Is that horrid woman gone, my dear, kind friends?" said Luckless, in a faint voice, shewing that he not only was not beside himself, but had recognised even the voices of his guests.

"She is!" faltered Inez; "we are come to see you, Mr. Luckless, and to know if we can do anything to serve you."

"Will you come near, and undraw these stifling curtains, and throw open this window, for I cannot breathe?"

Thalia undrew the bed-curtains; Inez gently opened the window, and admitted an evening breeze, which poor Luckless inhaled as if it were the breath of life.

"A gentleman!" he said faintly, when he saw

Thalia; "I thought I recognised the voice of Miss Evergreen."

"And so you do," said Thalia, removing her white hat, and suffering her abundant corkscrew ringlets to fall on her shoulders.

This ridiculous and romantic *coup de theatre* caused a faint smile to play even on the pale lips of poor Luckless.

"It is only under the shelter of this disguise," said Thalia, "that two young, unprotected, and inexperienced women could escape remark and censure, in taking such a step as this."

"How kind! how generous!" murmured poor Luckless, for his eye caught a glimpse of the graceful outline of Ines's figure, as, half shrouded by the curtain, she hid her blushes and her tears in her handkerchief.

"The people of the house think us your brother and sister," said Thalia; "mind you do not undeceive them!"

"Oh, no, not I indeed, for under this impression, they cannot oppose your removing me!

Oh, I can give you no idea, dear kind friends, of what I suffer, and have suffered for several days in this terrible room, and with that horrible salamander; not from the wound—that is nothing—but that creature seems to delight in breathing fire. This is the first blessed draught of pure air I have inhaled since I was brought into this dreadful place.”

“Oh, how much you must have suffered,” said Inez, coming forward on hearing this; “and the weather has been so close!”

“Oh, if you have any pity, take me hence; in mercy do. Let me go to my old lodging—anywhere, where I can breathe; you will save my life—a life which shall be one act of gratitude and devotion to your service.”

“But will it not be dangerous to move you?” said Inez.

“Oh, we cannot think of such a thing!” said Thalia; “it will ruin us—me particularly.”

“Then I shall die!” said Luckless; “that woman, she means it kindly, and I believe thinks

it right ; but she will kill me. All night there is a roaring fire, and every chink hermetically sealed. She has taken the most dreadful pains to stop up a little crevice in the door through which a breath of air—welcome, though redolent of spirits and tobacco—came from the den below.”

Inez by this time had opened her basket ; she brought forth her fan, her fresh flowers, her tempting fruit. Aided by Thalia, she smoothed poor Luckless’s hot and rumpled pillow and bed, and sprinkled them with refreshing rose and lavender water. Thalia even condescended to bathe his face with a handkerchief steeped in rose water, and to part his clustering curls of golden brown, with one of her own side combs.

Poor Luckless’s gratitude and ecstasy would have been quite incomprehensible to any one who had not endured four days of feverish incarceration in a close London room, heated with a large fire in the dog-days.

Inez sate beside him, feeding him with strawberries and hot-house grapes, while Thalia fanned

him, and bathed his temples with eau de Cologne.

In the ecstatic enjoyment of so much luxury, poor Luckless fell asleep—the first refreshing sleep he had had since his wound. *Thalia* whispered *Inez*, that this was a favourable opportunity for escaping; but *Inez* had not the heart to go. As he lay there, so statue-like in the marble whiteness of his fine face, so helpless, so wan, so desolate, and yet with an air of such ineffable comfort and delight on his lips where a faint vermilion tint begun to dawn, and around which a languid smile was playing—*Inez* thought of what would be his anguish when he awoke, and found them gone—the air excluded, the curtains drawn, the fire roaring, and the salamander at a second tea, or perhaps a first supper!”

“*Thalia*!” she said, imploringly, wringing her hands, and raising her tearful eyes—“we cannot go; or if we go, we must take him away.”

“Impossible! my dearest girl; do consider,

consider me, if not yourself. It will be my ruin—and just at this time too!”

“It shall not injure you, Thalia; you shall yet own it was both wise to yourself, and merciful to me. If, as I understand from your hints, you have made a conquest, and expect a proposal, oblige me in what I now require, and I will furnish you with a *trousseau* worthy of the bosom friend of Clementina Castleton. Nay more, you shall not go dowerless to your husband’s home; you will have acted as my sister, and I will behave as yours.”

“But,” whispered Thalia, “how can you realize all these generous projects, my Inez, if you throw yourself away on this obscure and penniless adventurer? You lose all but five hundred a year.”

“True,” said Inez; “and if he loves me, I am prepared to do so; but until I am actually married, I enjoy my present income, and long before I think of a husband for myself, even if I ever do, I will render you the poor services I spoke of.”



“And in case I never marry! for this step, which some may call unmaidenly, may rob me of all chance.”

“Still I will do the same, or rather more for you!”

“Ah, Inez! it is not for the sake of what you will do for me in any case, that I yield, but because I cannot resist the tearful eyes and pale cheeks of my chosen friend! and because I, too, begin to have some idea of what woman may feel —for—him who—loves her!”

This remark of Thalia's alluded to the interest Grumbleby's attentions had begun to awaken in her sensitive and maiden heart, and an arch glance stole for a moment through Inez's tears, and an irrepressible smile parted her pale lips. Quickly, however, recovering herself, she said: “Well, dear Thalia, what I wish then is to remain here to-night, to watch this poor friendless and afflicted sufferer, and to-morrow morning to remove him (if it can be done with safety) from this scene of horror, and convey him to a quiet

lodging by the sea-side. To effect this, you must write to Melpomene to say that I have begged you to stay with me to watch a sick friend, and you must desire Rose Pink to come in the coach we will send to "Evergreen House," with a suit of your own clothes for you, and whatever else we are likely to want for ourselves for a day or two. Rose had better come with the same coach to-morrow morning early, and as the people here think we are *his* brother and sister, they will not be surprised at our staying, nor resist our authority."

"And what will you do with the nurse?"

"Oh, I will remunerate her, so that she will be much better pleased with her fee than she could be with her patient. To-night I will get her to go to bed somewhere in this inn, and by praise and pay, we shall do very well with her. Take a leaf out of my pocket-book, dear Thalia, write a line to Melpomene and another to Rose—take my purse and pay the coachman—send him to Evergreen House, and tell him he must

be there again early to-morrow morning, and while you do all this, I will watch here."

Thalia having made up her mind to oblige, did so cheerfully and without any bewailings or self-reproaches—in which instance she set an example all confidantes would do well to follow, since they generally destroy, by their discontent and covert accusations, all the merit of their sacrifice, and all the grace of compliance.

But Thalia was naturally good tempered, had a strong tinge of romance in her nature, and not being in reality much smitten with Squire Grumbleby (though quite resolved to accept him if he proposed) she was not sorry to have something to fall back upon in case he disappointed her, and something to set her off, if he came to the point. Thalia was therefore in very high spirits and very good humour, and cordially joined with Inez in every possible arrangement for the comfort of the sufferer.

Luckless still slept as those sleep who have had not one hour of balmy sleep for several days

and nights; and to Inez it was rapture to watch the freedom of his respiration, the ease of his attitude, and the ineffable comfort of his repose. The room in which he lay opened into another, also a bed-room; in this Inez decided it would be best for the nurse to lie down, while Luckless slept; and when he awoke, and required his wound to be dressed, or any other services performed by Mrs. Tweedle, Inez and Thalia would retire to that room, and leave the patient and the nurse together. In this manner too, they would arrange, while Mrs. Tweedle got him ready for his journey—thus saving his delicacy and their own from every shock.

Before the nurse returned, they had closed the window and the curtains, and though the fire was almost out, and the room struck her, as she said, "all of a chill," she did not grumble much, because she inwardly attributed it all to her not having "made up the fire" before going out herself. She made no objection to the plan proposed,

and indeed looking upon Thalia and Inez as "the blessed sufferer's" relations, she considered they had a right to command; adding, she was "uncommon glad to be able, with a safe conscience, to lie down and get a wink of sleep, which she hadn't adone since she'd been that poor dear wictim's nuss."

As she really seemed a kind and conscientious person (as far as her own imperfect conception of her duty went), Inez won her heart by her commendations and her promises, and what was more important, enlisted her on her side as to the arrangements for the morrow. Mrs. Tweedle however stipulated, that she should have the honour of attending the young gentleman to Ramsgate, where she had a niece settled, and well to do. Inez could not refuse, resolving in her own mind to take upon herself the office of head-nurse; and a little moved by poor Mrs. Tweedle's saying, "that if the blessed sufferer was to be took'd out of her hands afore he was finished off one way or t'other, it would be thought

she'd misbehaved herself, and might ruin the honest livelihood she was now making!"

Mrs. Tweedle, before going to bed, insisted on getting the gentleman and lady their "teas comfortable"—an art she well understood, and as neither had dined, her services in this way were very welcome. She then very methodically got the dressings ready—prepared the febrifuges, Luckless was likely to want—ensured a supply of hot water—made up a huge fire, carefully closed the curtains, and fastened the shutters. When she was safely off, Inez removed the chief part of the fuel, gently undrew the curtains, noiselessly opened the shutters and the window, and let out the close and murky atmosphere, hot with the smell of the coals, and the candle, and let in the softest of summer breezes, and a moonlight as pure as that on which Juliet gazed, when first she linked the thought of that soft light with love and Romeo.

Thalia soon composed herself to sleep in the nurse's easy chair, and Inez, with Lalla Rookh in her hand, took her station by Luckless's pillow.

After awhile she too fell asleep, and her beautiful head sunk unconsciously to herself, on the edge of that pillow.

How lovely she looked in that soft moonlight, which touched with an outline of silver her graceful figure and her beautiful hands, played on the soft round of her cheek and the rosy arch of her lips, her full eye-lids with their long black lashes, and lost itself in the rich masses of her hair of almost a purple black.

How long she slept thus she knew not, but when she woke the grey light of dawn was in the room, and Luckless, his head supported on his hand, was gazing upon her through tears of tenderness and gratitude. Sweet Inez ! she was no prude, but her blushes were brighter than those with which Aurora began to paint the East, as she hastily said something about having closed her eyes for a moment—only a moment ; and this Luckless did not contradict, though he had been watching her for an hour !

Inez having first pointed out to his notice the

sharer and, as it were, chaperon of her watch, (who with a handkerchief bound round her head, cut a most absurd figure in Mr. Peevish's snuff-coloured suit) communicated to Luckless the plan they had formed, dependent solely on his feeling equal to a removal.

His delight, his gratitude, and his impatience for the realization of this (to him) enchanting scheme, were so vividly expressed, that they awoke Thalia from a dream of Grumbleby. And as it was now broad day, Inez proposed, that herself and Thalia should retire for an hour or two to the inner room, thus giving the nurse an opportunity for getting Luckless ready for his journey, on which he must set out early to be in time for the Ramsgate boat. Mrs. Tweedle was accordingly summoned, and the ladies withdrew.



## CHAPTER XX.

After the dreadful confinement of the "Grosvenor Arms," with its all-pervading, haunting smell of old tobacco-smoke, and fresh spirits, added to the suffocating heat of his close bedroom, it was a perfect enchantment to Luckless, to be on the deck of the Ramsgate steamer, on a fresh and lovely summer morning—a mattress and pillows having been placed there for him, covered with Inez's abundant supply of Indian shawls, and cloaks lined with sable and with ermine. Thalia had exchanged Mc. Peevish's snuff-coloured

suit, for comfortable garments of her own. Rose Pink, fresh and merry as a lark, and delighted with any change and any adventure, was in attendance; and Mrs. Tweedle, who had never been in a boat before, was confined to the cabin, being "took'd uncommon bad," and requiring the constant attendance of the Stewardess, and brandy and water.

The Nurse, Inez, and Luckless had left the Grosvenor Arms in one coach, and Rose Pink and Thalia followed in another, Rose having staid behind to assist Thalia in exchanging Mc. Peevish's snuff-coloured suit for her own garments. They then made a parcel of Mc. Peevish's things, which Thalia sent to her sister to replace in his wardrobe, and the coast being clear both of the landlady and "Riar," Thalia darted into the coach, followed by Rose.

When Thalia joined the party in the boat, Mrs. Tweedle did not recognise her, but was easily misled by Rose's ready invention, that Master had sent his sister instead of coming

himself. Poor Mrs. Tweedle, directly they started, which they did almost immediately, was too much taken up with her own sensations, to trouble any one with questions, or herself with conjectures. To Inez, who had doubled the cape, the motion of the vessel was rather agreeable than otherwise. Luckless, too, was a good sailor, and in his recumbent posture, felt rather rocked and soothed than otherwise by the undulations of the boat, when the breeze freshened. Thalia and Rose Pink were at first very confident, brave, and boastful; and the whole party breakfasted on deck with much delight. Luckless did not enjoy his coffee the less because Inez had it made in a little pot and biggin of her own, after her own fashion, and held his cup to his lips. It seemed to him that he had never tasted strawberries so delicious as those she prepared for him; and that everything she coaxed him into taking was nectar and ambrosia.

It was not very long after this merry breakfast that Thalia grew ominously silent and pale, and

Rose, who of course in proper respect had taken her repast at some distance, was seen to be handed down below (the vessel heaving a good deal after passing Sheerness) by a smart Cockney! Ere long, Thalia too disappeared, and the lovers were alone.

"They were alone, but not alone as they  
Who shut in chambers, think it loneliness."

Inez had been reading in a low musical voice, softly tuned to the ear of love, some of the most impassioned parts of the Fire-worshippers. The motion of the vessel had sent below all the daughters of Eve, with eyes so keen and curious, and so ready in detecting the presence of "young love." It was not yet the Ramsgate "season;" and the Cockneys were not yet flocking from the East to wash off the smoke and the soot of a twelvemonth. A solitary invalid or two paced up and down the deck, and a young bride and bridegroom kept as much to themselves, and as far from our lovers, as either parties could wish,

Feeling they were in reality alone, Inez's voice faltered ; she knew Luckless's eyes were fixed on her, she felt their glances in her beating heart. She was seated on a cushion by his side, and presently he extended a trembling hand, and gently pressed her own.

"Inez!" he said; "Angel of this dark and troublous world! Sweet Inez! I love you.... Do I—love—in vain, dearest?"

Inez raised her eyes, they met his; hers were full of tears, and though they dropped directly, he read in them all he wished to know! Inez gently returned the pressure of his hand, and Luckless pressed hers to his lips. A long, long silence ensued—a silence far more eloquent than words—the silence of hearts too full for utterance.

At length Luckless said: "Sweet Inez! I am not equal just yet to the full confession and explanation you are now entitled to. But I will tell you, sweet one, that I am not what I

seen and that the mystery which surrounds me is not darkened by any guilt.

"But is it not imprudent," said Inez, with a bright smile of love and joy, "in the step-child of Fortune and the protégée niece of the poor Evergreens to love——"

"And, with God's blessing, to marry," said Luckless. "No, my sweet, sweet Inez! I cannot offer the destiny you merit; but now that happiness has made me good, now that I find a life of virtuous and pious retirement will be shared by one who is all the world to me, I no longer shrink from a profession, which once seemed to require sacrifices I could not conscientiously make. With such a help-mate I no longer shrink from a Christian pastor's peaceful life. First Love, the angel of my heart, has awakened all good spirits to attend him. A sweet home, a venerable parsonage, a happy competence, and a good life—these shunned, declined, till now, I offer thee, my Inez!—Say you will share them!"

"Dearest! I will," said Ines; "but hush! now; this excitement has exhausted you—not one word more!"

"Then let me hold your hand."

Ines gave her hand, and her lover was silent, but blest.

## CHAPTER XXI.

We must now leave Luckless, happy and convalescent, installed in delightful lodgings on the Fort at Ramsgate, and return with Inez, Thalia, and Rose Pink, to London.

Inez, though capable, as we have seen, of acts of great devotion and self-sacrifice in the hour of danger and distress, was no bold, world-defying woman ; all the most delicate scruples and sensibilities of a maiden loving for the first time, haunted her fancy and filled her breast.

She was not at all disposed to profit by the independence of her situation, or of her fortune,



to set etiquette at defiance, except where the life or the safety of him she loved demanded the sacrifice; and then the generous and impassioned woman, without a thought of public opinion, or of herself, would have followed him in beggary and obloquy through the world. But the case was altered now; they were affianced, and to Inez's delicate nature, that circumstance, instead of increasing her liberty of action, added to her coy and maidenly reserve. They had yet much to reveal to each other, which by a sort of tacit consent, both agreed to withhold till they met in London, and proclaimed their engagement to all concerned. And now, having taken delightful lodgings for him, filled his windows with flowers and plants, provided him with books, and had his sofa placed in a window recess, whence he could gaze on the ever-changing ocean, and watch the sunny sails—Inez prepared to depart, and her lover reading her pure heart in her blushing cheek, sought not to detain her.

Mrs. Tweedle, who watched with terror and

dismay the new system pursued with her "blessed sufferer," and who really believed that every breath of fresh air brought on its wings, catarrh, sciatica, and rheumatism, was not very sorry to be dismissed, particularly as the niece who was so "well to do," and whose husband kept the "Cock and Bull," had just presented him with a double pledge of her affection in the shape of twin-boys.

At such a crisis, and so handsomely remunerated as Mrs. Tweedle was by Inez, she was particularly welcome at the "Cock and Bull," and there she proceeded to enforce her air-excluding system, which, however, is much more in vogue among the lower than the higher orders.

The mistress of Luckless's lodgings, (a motherly woman) with her daughters, and her maid of all work, were quite equal to all the attendance Luckless now required, and with many promises and many vows, many hopes and not a few tears, the lovers parted.

## CHAPTER XXII.

Let us inquire now after the bereaved mother, whom we left a prey to a species of anguish a mother only can know in all its intensity. The reader has of course already divined that the inhuman blow beneath which her reason almost fell a sacrifice, was one of the abominable devices of the jealous, the vindictive, and the cold-blooded "Calculator."

He saw that in her security and her happiness, he was nothing to her, and that Adolphus Fitz-opal was gradually gaining that place in her confidence and her heart, and that importance in her

existence, which he would have died to obtain. He remembered when it was not so—when in the tumultuous agonies of her terror for her child's life, Adolphus was nothing to her, and he was all—her companion—her confidant—the sharer of her midnight watch—the partaker of every dawning hope—the comforter of every irrepressible fear.

He wished to bring back those days—days, when he had held her hand without a fear of its withdrawal—wiped away her tears—and knelt beside her. Poor young mother! she was not even conscious that he did so! she only knew that he seemed to try to save her child—that he seemed to love and pity it! and who would not? who that saw it gasping on what seemed its bed of death, would not have done as he did? No thought of herself, as the real object of all this devotion, ever for one moment darkened the pure heart of the mourning mother.

But with the dread of losing her child, the bond between them was severed—far too easily

severed, thought Gaspar Smiley, who, like all selfish people, attached immense importance to any services he had rendered Ada, both in his own attendance and the cure wrought by Janet; and who had expected to have unlocked in her heart a perennial fount of gratitude, whose waters would quickly call into luxuriance the passion-flower he yet hoped to plant there.

His disappointment was bitter in the extreme; but in planning and executing his dastardly revenge, he had not had in view the overthrow of Ada's reason or the ruin of her health. He only wished to bring her to the same state of meek, tearful, and exclusive dependance on himself, in which it was such luxury to him to see her, and from which he had once delivered her. Through his plotting brain floated, it is true, some vile and half-formed stipulations, which he had a faint notion he might make in case he could make her believe that he devoted his whole soul, and endangered his very life to recover her lost trea-

sure, and was in fact the happy means of restoring her boy uninjured to her arms.

But all "Calculator" as he was, he who, though he was a father, had never known one parental feeling, he had no conception of the frantic and prostrating anguish such a mother as Ada would feel in the abduction of her only child—how Fancy would conjure up horrors to which its certain death in her bosom would have been a tender mercy—how Reason would reel and her bodily health sink under this horrible infliction ! Her tender grief, tintured as it was with alarm, when she watched him in his illness, was a mild and manageable feeling compared to her agonies now.

Perceiving this, and dreading that this torturing suspense, if prolonged, might alienate her reason and destroy her life, Gaspar Smiley resolved to restore her darling before any such fatal effect ensued ; and as he intended to make up a plausible story of risks he had run, and dangers he had braved in this good cause, he

thought he might yet hope something from her gratitude, when she should learn that he who had perilled life to comfort her was pining in hopeless anguish for her sake.

At any rate, he saw it was dangerous any longer to delay the restoration of the child, and he felt that, come what would, the mother must always look upon him as her best friend and benefactor.

The large reward offered for the recovery of little Noah had set all London on the *qui vive*, and it was considered among all classes a marvel and a mystery, how the child of people of such importance could be stolen so adroitly from a house in Belgrave Square, without any clue whatever being left by which the most acute of the police could trace the cause of the crime, or the retreat of the culprit.

And yet this miracle of mysteries was effected in the simplest manner possible. While the Ball guests were listening to a song of Grisi's, and the servants were at supper, Gaspar Smiley, seeing

the coast quite clear, had stolen little Noah from his cot, fast asleep as he was after the fatigues of the ball—hidden him under an ample cloak, and passed out with him into the street unnoticed by any one.

After walking some little distance, he took a cab, and was driven to Brompton, where, in a mean lodging, dwelt a woman, one of his many victims, and who had fallen into his power after his brother Anthony had been by his arts tricked out of his uncle's fortune, and driven in desperation to seek his fortunes abroad. This woman, at that time a young and lovely girl, named Marian Moore, had been poor Anthony's first love, and, though much beneath him in rank, was at this time entitled to his hand.

Under a promise of marriage, he, Anthony Smiley, wild and dissipated, had seduced this poor girl; but that promise he intended to keep, if any public disgrace was likely at any time to be the result of her faulty faith in a wild young man, so much her superior in rank; as, in spite



of his many faults, Anthony Smiley had not the base, cold heart of his brother, it is certain that he would have kept that promise had he been aware of a fact which poor Marian had not found courage to reveal to him; when she was summoned from the straw-bonnet shop, where she was an apprentice, to the death-bed of her mother, a respectable tradesman's wife.

It was during her absence, and while in that ignorance of her situation, that Anthony lost his uncle and his inheritance; and that in the recklessness of his rage and despair at finding himself beggared and disinherited, he quitted his native place, and indeed his country, without an interview with Marian.

A sad warning to yielding woman was this forgetfulness of his first love, in the hour of anguish and disappointment. Had Marian Moore been true to herself, Anthony Smiley would not even have been seemingly false to her. But he knew not the claims she had on him, and she had taken that fatal step which renders a

man independent of woman, in the same proportion that it makes her dependent on him. She was no longer the object of a restless, tormenting passion, which neither prosperity nor adversity would have abated. She was nothing now, and he forgot her.

When he did think of her, and of her devoted and clinging love, the chances of life had hurried him where, poor and at the mercy of others, he had no means of seeing, or communicating with her. Now it so happened that Gaspar Smiley had shared his brother's admiration of, and passion for, this poor girl; but with him these feelings had lasted, because her love for Anthony had made her to Gaspar "the Unattainable." And although, in general, his much handsomer person and more insinuating address had made Gaspar a far greater favorite with women than his brother, yet while one woman whom he liked preferred that brother, the jealous "Calculator" knew no peace. Horrible and desolate indeed was the situation of poor Marian, when, on

returning from the heart-rending scene of her mother's death, she found her lover gone, and her own shame becoming startlingly apparent. Ere long indeed her employer coldly dismissed her; her father, who had been made acquainted with her fall by some anonymous correspondent, (Gaspar of course) sent her his curse when she begged leave to return to him; and it was while wandering, hopeless and houseless, now thinking of self-destruction with a savage joy, and now shrinking appalled from her own dreadful designs, that Gaspar, assuming the shape of an angel of mercy, offered her protection, money, a lodging, and sympathy. Nor did he, till after the birth of her child, reveal the selfish motives and wishes which had prompted his conduct. When he did so, she was so much in his power, so disgraced and lost in her own opinion, so friendless, so forlorn, and, by his wily misrepresentations, so exasperated against Anthony, that she yielded to his proposals—and was his, as long as his fickle fancy for her lasted.

During their intimacy, poor Marian, naturally quick and clever, fathomed a little the character of Gaspar Smiley; and in proportion as she unravelled his treachery and sordid sensuality, she felt her old faith in, and love for, Anthony return. But this she wisely concealed, for, long after all passion for Marian had passed away, an intense jealousy of her affection for his brother remained, and he hated the sight of the poor little boy Anthony, or rather Tony, as Marian would call him; and whom, in her heart, she loved, though he was a wan and sickly little cripple, far, far more than two very fine boys, and a lovely cherub girl, who bore a resemblance to the "Calculator." But Tony was her first-born—the child of her first love; his infirmities the result of the anguish of heart and mind she had endured on his account, and Tony was the darling of her inmost heart.

Poor Marian! after Gaspar Smiley deserted her, which he did in a heartless though a specious manner, she had sinned much and suffered much; and with that rapid deterioration of which

woman's nature is, alas! too capable, she had even assisted Gaspar Smiley in many a questionable deed.

Gaspar heard that Tony was ailing, had been ailing for some time, and that Marian longed of all things to take him to the sea-side—a remedy which a doctor had prescribed for him. This knowledge Gaspar had obtained through a letter Marian had written to him, and in which she implored him to aid her in taking Tony at least to Gravesend. He had never intended to take the slightest notice of this application beyond a line of cold and peremptory refusal; but it struck him, while meditating his revenge on Ada at the fancy ball, that this wish of Marian's might be the stepping-stone to his revenge.

To Marian's lodging, then, he bore the little sleeping Noah. It was some time before he obtained admittance, and when he did, Marian received him with the flutter of spirit of a person surprised in some deed she wished to conceal. She came from her bed-room, but she ushered

Gaspar into a little work-shop, where she toiled at her own trade of straw bonnet making, and where it did not escape Gaspar's quick eye, that on the table was a tray covered with a cloth, where two glasses and two plates had been left, recently used, while a dish with a cover was close by. A bottle stood on the table; it contained wine, and Gaspar, pale and nervous from his recent felonious exploit, helped himself before unfolding his prize or his object.

"You have not supped alone, I see," he said, satirically; "and to judge by the excellence of this cognac, and the contents of this dish, you have made a good repast."

The dish contained the remains of some lamb chops, stewed in peas.

"Pah!" he said, "I loathe that dish; it was Anthony's favourite, and always reminds me of him. As boys we have often cooked it on the sly, with meat we stole from the larder, and peas of our own growing. You, I suppose, like it for his dear sake," he said, with a sneer.

"Yes," said Marian, "I have never ceased to remember him."

"It is a pity he did not return the compliment."

"Ah!" said Marian, "who knows where he may be now?"

"And who cares except your spaniel self, Marian? He spurned my assistance, accused, and insulted me."

"He thought you had maligned him to his uncle—caused him to be left a beggar——"

"And what of that? he had no proof; even if I had, every man for himself. His wisest plan would have been to have conciliated me."

"Yes, but Passion is never wise."

"Well," said Gaspar, "I did not come here to discuss this old story with you, Marian; I came to give you the means of taking your brat to Margate."

"Indeed!" said Marian, the tears springing to her eyes—"Oh, Gaspar! I had not expected this of you."

"But on this condition. See here, Marian!"

And Gaspar unfolded his cloak, and displayed the most exquisite of sleeping cherubs, attired in his little night-dress.

"Oh what an angel!" said Marian.

"Well!" interrupted Gaspar, taking out a purse; "here are the means of taking Tony to Margate; but you must take this child with you—dress him in some of your children's clothes, and let him pass as yours—keep him till I reclaim him! and remember that although, if you do so, all will be well, and you will have obliged ME, if you neglect any precaution, or let any doubt arise of the child being your own, my life and your liberty may be endangered. At eight o'clock, then, be ready to start in a hackney coach with this child and Tony. I will send one to take you to the Tower, whence, at nine, a boat for Margate starts. Above all, be off before your other children are up, and before the old charwoman comes, whose impertinent curiosity I wish you particularly to escape. You can leave direc-



tions in writing for the old crone. At half-past eight I shall be here to see that you are off. And"—he added, after a moment's thought—"that the children are safe in the care of old Hester. And now I have nothing further to say, Marian, except that the prospects of yourself and your children will greatly depend on the way in which you manage this important affair. And now farewell, my girl, you have no time to lose."

So saying, Gaspar Smiley folded his cloak around him, and returned to Lady Fathom's, where his absence had not been perceived.

Owing to all the precautions Marian, acting by Gaspar's advice, had taken, all clue to the discovery of little Noah was lost. Before her other children were awake, and before the old woman who helped her to take care of them had arrived, Marian, having dressed little Noah in some of her own children's clothes, was off in the hackney coach Gaspar sent for her. Old Hester, who knew how ardently she longed to take little Tony to the sea-side, and who had herself advised the

application to Gaspar, was not at all surprised at her departure, and she arrived at Margate in perfect safety with the two children. As she was naturally kind and gentle, and was particularly indulgent to the beautiful little cherub thus confided to her, he soon accommodated himself to the change; some cheap toys and sugar plums rendered him perfectly docile; and though he could pronounce a few words, they were not such as to awaken any suspicion.

Gaspar Smiley had directed Marian where to take up her abode at Margate; and therefore, when once he had decided that it was necessary to preserve Lady Fathom's reason, if not her life, that her child should be restored to her, he determined to wait on her, gently awaken her hopes and her gratitude; tell her, after enjoining her to the strictest secrecy, that he had a clue to the hiding-place of her darling—that a hint of his discovery getting abroad might cause the felons who had stolen to destroy the child, and that to recover it he must risk his own life.

After this disclosure he would disappear, and not return till he bore her darling in his arms.

It was about a week after its abduction, and three days after the announcement of the immense reward and free pardon, that Gaspar Smiley resolved on this line of conduct. Lady Fathom now kept her room ; but he knew she would see him on such a mission.

She had done so late the night before, in her dressing-room ; and it was the wildness of her manner, her dishevelled hair and neglected dress, the dark circles round her eyes, and the hectic spot on her cheek, which had decided him to restore her boy before it was too late. During that interview, Fanny was present ; but now he had seen Fanny driving out, probably on some mission connected with this affair, and his guilty heart beat as he thought the unhappy mother, too miserable to think of etiquette at such a time, would probably receive him alone. Perhaps he might be able to hint to her how valueless to him was the life he was about to risk for her—how

entirely his very soul was hers ; at any rate, at parting on such a mission, when she must believe he was going to venture for her into the dark retreats of Crime, he would clasp her once to his throbbing heart, and compel her to say, "Gaspar, I bless you." He would also insist on the elucidation of the mystery of that meeting in the Pavilion on the night of the *bal costumé*, about which he begun to entertain notions which were very near solving that problem. It was, then, with a plotting head, a pale cheek, and a throbbing heart, that Gaspar Smiley drove up to the door of Sir Noah Fathom's house. He was a little disappointed to see that Lady Fathom's carriage was at the door, for of course Fanny and Fitzopal had returned in it from their drive ; and it might be difficult, in consequence, to obtain a *tête-a-tête* with Lady Fathom.

But what was his bitter and jealous fury—what his disappointment, and even his dread, when on the door being opened, he found himself suddenly in the centre of a group of weeping, rejoicing,

shrieking women—and men, murmuring their joy and repressing their tears. He arrived just in time to see Lady Fathom, still dishevelled and in her neglected attire, rush down-stairs with a scream of joy, and receive from Fitzopal's arms, her recovered darling; who, rosy as dawn, and lovelier than ever, clapped his little hands and crowed in chorus with the noisy emotions of all around him.

Ada received her darling in her arms, and then, but for Fitzopal and Janet, who was by, sobbing in rapture, she would have sunk lifeless on the floor; and poor old Sir Noah, his leg covered with bandages, and in his bed-gown, nightcap, and slippers, was sobbing like a child, as sitting on the stairs, he pressed little Noah to his bosom, again and again; and did not remember the state his attire was in, till Stubbs, who was also weeping for joy, led him almost forcibly from the scene.

Ghastly pale, and his evil conscience prompting a thousand coward fears of his own detection,

Gaspar looked on ; but he was soon relieved by Fanny's rushing up to shake hands with him, and exclaiming : " Dear, dear Major Smiley ! after all your kindness, and all the trouble you have taken, I ought to have chosen you as my cavalier on this occasion ; but cousin Adolphus happened to be here, and there was not a moment to lose ! "

This speech a little restored Major Smiley's presence of mind, and he said : " Let us convey Lady Fathom to her sofa, and then you must tell me all the particulars of this joyful event. "

" Oh, they are soon told, " said Fanny. " The darling was stolen away in the hopes of a large reward being offered ; that reward has been paid, and here he is ; but see, Ada opens her eyes, and for the first time since she lost him, those eyes look like Ada's own ! "

## CHAPTER XXIII.

How bitter, how unlooked for a *contretemps*, was this. How Gaspar Smiley cursed himself, Fitzopal, Marian Moore, and even little Noah, in the venom of his baffled and disappointed heart. And he had taken all this trouble, incurred all this risk, and endured all this suspense, to give Fitzopal the delight of placing little Noah in his mother's arms, and thus investing him with a new charm in her eyes, and giving him a new claim on her affection!

She was not likely to remember how little

Fitzopal had to do with the actual recovery of her darling; he would now be for ever associated in her mind with the rapture of clasping him again to her bosom. And how had this come to pass? what perils might not be connected, for Gaspar Smiley, with Marian's now inevitable knowledge of the child's parentage! with what dangerous associates might she not be linked! There was much of what was good and noble in her once; and in spite of her first error, Anthony had left her pure except in her weak reliance on, and her strong devotion to, him. But Gaspar, he had worked diligently at the vile work of her corruption; he had made her bold and scheming, sly and rapacious, and the only good feelings he had never been able quite to efface, were the constancy of heart (in spite of the faithlessness of her conduct) to her first love, and her passionate devotion to its unhappy pledge—the sickly and crippled little Tony.

Gaspar Smiley now remembered with alarm the bottle of spirits, the two glasses and plates,



the good supper, and Marian's confused and hurried manner, the night he had repaired to her lodgings with little Noah. How probable that some low fellow, willing and ready to urge her to treachery and crime, had only concealed himself till Gaspar was safe off, and had then become acquainted with the secret which might ruin the Calculator's hopes and character for ever. It now struck him, for the first time, that the little night-dress and the shawl in which the child was wrapped, might have been marked, so as to identify him at once, and that when Sir Noah offered impunity and £5000 for the restoration of the child uninjured, Marian's accomplice (for he was sure on reflection that she had an accomplice) would of course urge her to avail herself of so dazzling an offer.

Lady Fathom having been conveyed to her dressing-room, little Noah, Fanny, and Janet accompanying her, Major Smiley learnt from Fitzopal the details of the restoration of the child.

A young and pretty woman, of good address and respectably attired, had called, and begged to see Sir Noah on business of vital importance. What story she made out, he, Fitzopal, did not exactly know, as Sir Noah was bound to secrecy by a vow; but the result was, that if Lady Fathom, or her sister, would repair to a certain house, at a certain time, with the reward in bank notes, the child should be restored uninjured, by an old woman, who, though not one of the culprits, was authorized to receive the reward—that any attempt at apprizing the police, or punishing the offenders, would perhaps cause some injury to the child, and certainly prevent its restoration. The young woman added, that she was not a party concerned, but knowing those who were, and feeling for the mother of the lost child, she had offered her services, and of course depended on the good faith of Sir Noah. She added, that if any man accompanied Lady Fathom, the child would not be given up.

"And how then did you get mixed up in this affair?" asked Smiley, bitterly.

"Of course," said Fitzopal, "Lady Fathom's going was impossible, and lest the whole might prove a cruel hoax, fatal to the unhappy mother, we kept the affair a secret from her, and we (for I of course was there) resolved to ask Fanny to go in her sister's place. Fanny is a brave, good girl, and she agreed. I went with her as far as ——— Street, and then I got out; she proceeded in the carriage with the reward to Grape Court. The servants knew nothing of our mission—the young woman had bound all concerned to secrecy. After about twenty minutes, to my unspeakable relief, the carriage dashed up to the shop where I was, and I saw Fanny, weeping for joy, with little Noah in her arms. When we reached the house, the poor girl was so hysterical and so overpowered, she could not enjoy the luxury of placing it in its mother's arms, and that delightful task devolved on me. By George! Smiley, loving that woman so madly, so doatingly, as I

do, you cannot conceive my ecstasy in restoring her to life and happiness; nor my thrill of ineffable rapture, when, looking from her child to me, with those enchanting large blue eyes full of tears, which hung on their brown lashes, she said: 'God bless you, Adolphus!' and swooned away."

"Yes, it was a fine windfall for a lover that!" said Smiley, grinding his teeth, and white with rage and envy; "and if you have sense and spirit to profit by it and make the most of it, I should think you would yet have time to subdue your fair cousin before you elope with the heiress. Oh, if I had your cards to play, Fitz—I mean supposing I had your interest in the game; but, then, I am not a sentimentalist. Women can't play fast and loose with me. I'm not to be trifled with."

"No, nor am I; but there is something in Ada that positively awes me."

"No woman could awe me," said Gaspar, rather sneeringly.

“Not if so innocent, so virtuous, as not even to fear you?”

“I have no faith in the virtue of women. I believe there are women who have never fallen; I believe Lady Fathom is one; but that is only because she has never been sufficiently tempted. She is innocent, because she has never been tried. She would be virtuous if, being really tried, she were constantly and consistently to resist. But after all it is better as it is; you, Fitz, are just cut out to be a Platonic Lover, and we have often agreed how much lovelier and dearer seems the lip we have never pressed, than that we have; so that for a man like you, it is best as it is!”

“Oh, I am not at all of that opinion,” said Fitzopal, rather nettled. “It is miserable as it is, and I cannot stand it much longer.”

“Well, if that is really the case, now’s your time! At any rate if you do not subdue your fair cousin’s pride before you elope with the heiress, it will be a more difficult task afterwards. She is just the sort of woman to believe in

exclusive, entire, and romantic devotion ; and to make great sacrifices for the sake of a great passion, particularly if she shares it in the least ; but I am much mistaken if she would not become perfectly invincible were she to suspect that any other feeling could actuate her adorer, save a mad worship of her. She would make no allowance whatever for any other interest or pursuit, no, not for the commonest laws of self-preservation. If she thought that to save yourself from ruin, you could form a plan of which she was not the object, it would be all at an end !”

“ But how then, if I actually elope with this odious heiress ?”

“ Ah, my dear fellow, if that were *after*, it would not so much matter. I speak of Ada as she is—proud, unconquered, and believing herself (so entire is her self-reliance) unconquerable. But a woman once subdued, is always subdued ; and Ada, all angel as she looks, is only a woman after all.”

“ Well, my dear Gaspar, angel or woman, I

cannot live without her, so I must put myself under your guidance, and take a leaf out of your book. As you say, time presses; Solomon and Levi will not give a day's grace; and I'm so knocked up with one thing and another, I've no more strength than a girl. Come and dine with me at Long's, and let's discuss this over a glass of Burgundy. We shall see no more of Ada to-night. Come, and let's plan and plot a little how we may bring down her pride, and make her happy in spite of herself!"

With such light converse, they beguiled the way to Long's, and seasoned their rich repast and their costly wine. And oh! if woman did but know how little in reality the most devoted lover thinks of the greatest sacrifice she can make—how ready he is to believe that she falls the victim of her own passion, not of pity for his; and if she were once convinced how easily, in spite of pale cheeks, tears, and vows, he would recover from the most incurable and eternal love, would she ever be so weak as to peril all

her prospects in this world and the next, to ease the selfish pangs of one who can discuss her probable downfall, with a sensual art, over a bottle of Burgundy !

And yet it is for such as these, this sensual and cold-hearted Gaspar Smiley, and this fascinating, enamoured, but selfish Adolphus Fitzopal, that so many women have sacrificed husband, children, the world's esteem, and oh, more dreadful far, their own. Idleness and Vanity are at the root of all these dreadful evils—Idleness, which gives the fashionable young wife time, and Vanity, which lends her inclination, to believe that she inspires a passion which is in reality as ephemeral as it is insulting ; but which she is soon persuaded is destroying its victim. Her first object is to comfort ; innocent and self-relying, she has no idea that she can ever be led to err. Alas ! she has erred directly she has met with indulgence, or without resentment, one look, however humble or despairing, of a passion she has now no right to inspire or to pity. Let her



ask her own heart, whether she is willing to confide to her husband the discovery she has made. If she shrinks from the bare thought, let her beware; that simple question is her best touchstone—a priceless amulet for a true heart—and the lesson it contains, the best WARNING TO WIVES.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.







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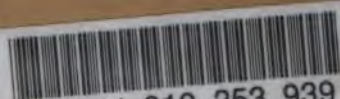
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